# THE CHURCH'S OPPORTUNITY IN ADULT EDUCATION

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# THE CHURCH'S OPPORTUNITY IN ADULT EDUCATION

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*To My Wife*

ALICE EDITH WESTPHAL

who became my life companion at the threshold of adulthood
and whose Christian faith and life have been for twenty-three
years my greatest inspiration in the service of Christ
and the major means
of any progress I have made toward growing up

# PREFACE

Since the beginning of the Christian movement, the need for adult Christian education has existed. That need has been accentuated by every world crisis. With all the civilizations of today in process of change, and with some of the changes challenging the foundations of the Christian religion, adult Christian education is for us an imperative.

In America there is an adult education movement of astounding proportions. This movement is a testimony to the desire of adults to continue their growth. It is a challenge to the church to contribute the Christian element to the education of those who desire to make their education continuous.

Dr. Westphal in this text has set forth the need for the Christian education of adults. This need is described in terms of challenge and opportunity. In the presence of this need the church does not stand defeated. In fact, the author indicates the lines the church should follow in planning and carrying on an adequate program of adult Christian education.

This text has grown out of the wide experience of the author in his work with adults. As pastor, area director, and Director of Adult Education and Men's Work for the Board of Christian Education of his denomination, he has had abundant opportunity to learn the needs of adults and to demonstrate the possibilities of adult Christian education. This text is an expression of the author's faith in the educability of adults, in their responsiveness, and in the willingness of the church to provide for their continuing needs.

Glenn McRae,
*Chairman of the Committee on Texts for the Adult Division Courses of the Leadership Training Publishing Association.*

# FOREWORD

This book is designed to indicate the unparalleled and strategic opportunity we confront today for developing an effective program of adult Christian education. It attempts to point the way the church is to go in planning and carrying out this program.

If space had permitted, we would have included a great deal more of historical material in the opening chapters, because the history of adult education throws considerable light upon the meaning of adult education itself. We had to content ourselves with a brief dip into the stream of history.

A perusal of the " Table of Contents " will indicate the organization of the material in this book. It is obvious that not everything can be attempted in a book that is intended to be introductory to the comprehensive phases of present-day adult work in the churches. We have tried to cover the essential elements that will illustrate the church's opportunity. We believe that the churches have a unique opportunity, and we have tried to motivate pastors and other leaders of adults to grasp this opportunity while it is " white . . . unto harvest."

A large number of people shared in the preparation of this book. I am especially indebted to members of the Committee on the Religious Education of Adults of the International Council of Religious Education, who reviewed and criticized the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions. The responsible persons in the Leadership Training Publishing Association were most helpful.

Special mention should be made of the co-operation of my secre-

tary, Blanche E. Smiley, and of Mary H. Elvidge, both of whom have worked with me in the preparation of the manuscript.

The gracious co-operation of the publishers who are quoted in this book is also deeply appreciated.

E. P. W.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,
May 1, 1941.

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## Chapter I

# THE CHURCH "DISCOVERS" ADULT EDUCATION

Mighty rivers existed ages before men discovered them. Not until the year 1541 did a Spanish explorer by the name of De Soto "discover" the Mississippi River, but unless "Old Man River" had been rolling along for countless ages, De Soto's discovery would have been of little importance. Similarly the year 1926 marks the occasion when the American Association for Adult Education came into being. But adult education had been in existence decades, even centuries, before 1926. Streamlets, such as Bishop Grundtvig's adult schools in Denmark, Great Britain's labor colleges, America's fight against illiteracy, the church's [1] teaching and preaching, and the labors of museums, lyceums, Chautauquas, correspondence courses, university extension courses, agricultural extension, and other movements, had been gathering momentum, and converging to form a mighty system. It was the American Association for Adult Education that took the lead in discovering that all these movements were related and should be recognized as belonging together. Thus the present movement in adult education is the discovery that adults belong to an ongoing stream of life that is truly educational.

The church discovered adult education when some of the leaders and workers in the church realized that efforts with adults, such as women's work, men's work, adult Bible classes, preaching, and so forth, were really part of the educational stream that was flowing ever onward. With this realization came the determination to use educational processes with all phases of adult work. Churches

[1] In order not to confuse the reader by complicated distinctions in meaning between "Church" and "church," the word church will not be capitalized in this book except in headings.

began to see more clearly than ever before that educational work with children and young people must be complemented by educational work with adults. Hence better defined programs for adults came into being, and some of the denominations called directors of adult education to become staff members of their boards of Christian education. It may be worth remembering that the first full-time denominational director began work in 1929.

### 1. The Church and the General Adult Education Movement Look at Each Other.

As we face the total adult education movement today, we are confronted by a somewhat disturbing and baffling situation. Here, on the one hand, is a strong general adult education program, moving out along broad cultural lines as well as along vocational and other specific lines. It prides itself that it is interested in education for its own sake — education for democratic thinking and democratic living, education for social reconstruction. Here, on the other hand, is the church, dealing with a large adult constituency and carrying on a number of purposive efforts to promote adult growth primarily along specifically religious lines.

The situation is disturbing because neither of these parallel movements has had much regard for the other. Indeed they have gone forward as separate movements, paying little or no attention to each other.

The situation is baffling because, when the two groups have become conscious of each other, there has been little appreciation on either side. In many instances there has been misunderstanding and criticism, and sometimes a disposition to belittle each other. The church has sometimes charged the general movement with being " secular " and, therefore, outside the interest and concern of the church. One result has been the drawing of a sharp line between the two. On the other hand, a recent study made under the auspices of the American Association for Adult Education intimates that much that the church has been doing is not adult educa-

tion at all; at least it is not comparable to the general movement, nor an integral part of it, because of the " doctrinal bent or bias " or because it has been of a " character peculiar to its institutional or religious interests." [2]

One cannot help wondering, if that which the church is doing with adults is not " education " because it " extends the spiritual or evangelical cause of the church," what should be the designation of the efforts in workers' education to help to develop appreciation of an effective participation in the labor union? Is one " education " and the other not? How so? The time has come to change all this. Why should not the initiative be taken by the church?

It is the viewpoint of this book that we do not have here two hostile camps, but two groups which are working toward a common purpose. These groups should unite their forces so as to supplement and complement each other's efforts. When they have come together to face the common problem of adult interest and needs, both have recognized that each is striving for much the same goal — that of richer, more abundant life for individuals and for society. Certainly the church has, at its best, held as its objective the developing of adult persons who have the disposition and ability to function efficiently as Christians in all the situations which they face in home, church, community, state, national, and world relationships.

This fact is recognized in the study just referred to which says, " The conclusion would seem to be that a predominant phase of adult education being undertaken in Protestantism, under official auspices and projected as a United Christian Adult Movement, is strikingly in accord with the educational objectives of adult education leaders in the general field, who find the focus of education in social change." [3] A similar statement appears in connection with " The 'Learning for Life' Program of Guided Adult Study." [4]

[2] B. E. Meland, *The Church and Adult Education,* pp. 98–103.
[3] *Ibid.,* p. 106.
[4] *Ibid.,* pp. 100, 101.

## 2. Religion and Adult Education Abroad.

In the adult education movement abroad, notably in the British Isles and in Denmark, religious people and the church were leaders of real distinction.

In 1763, Robert Raikes, the father of the Sunday School movement, was assisted in Yorkshire by Rev. T. Lindsey and Miss Cappe. This effort in the education of poor children led, in 1798, to attempts by Joseph Lancaster to carry education to the poorer classes of London, where he at once set the better pupils in his school to teaching the poorer ones. This work laid the foundation for the British and Foreign School Society, which from 1813 until after the introduction of the national educational system in 1870 provided a large part of elementary education. Adults were early associated with the Lancasterian schools. In a report dated September 28, 1815, reference is made to the Sunday afternoon classes for adults, " many of whom, at the time of their introduction, were utterly unacquainted with the elements of learning but are now capable of reading with tolerable accuracy such extracts of the Holy Scripture as have been judiciously selected for this mode of tuition." By 1789 we find " The Sunday Society," founded by Sunday School teachers and designed for workingmen. Later developments were the Mechanics' Institutes, the People's College in Sheffield, and the Workingmen's College in London.

The first recorded adult school was in Nottingham, where, in 1789, William Singleton, of the Methodist New Connection Church, together with the Quaker, Samuel Fox, started a school which met at seven o'clock on each Sunday morning. Reading and the Bible were taught mainly by the women assistants in Fox's grocery shop.

Other school ventures are reported from Wales in the early eighteenth century. Chapels were used, but even barns were lent for meeting places. The purpose was to teach adults to read, especially to read the Bible. Between 1737 and 1760, 150,212 people were taught to read the Welsh Bible.

These enterprises in England and Wales were the early fore-

runners of the adult school movement in the British Isles. The whole project was closely tied up with the formation, in 1800, of the British and Foreign Bible Society. One of its promoters, Thomas Pole, M.D., was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but went to England as a young man. He was a Friend, and was as keen on religion as he was on medicine. He started a school in Bristol, where he lectured on chemistry, economy of nature, and mineralogy. The series was especially for women who had been " too much excluded from opportunities of scientific improvement." These lectures were carried on in addition to the regular schools and classes, which had as their objective teaching people to read " distinctly and readily in the Bible." Later, in spite of considerable opposition to the idea, the teaching of writing was begun. The opposition was on three grounds: first, that the Holy Spirit would help people to read the Word, but not to write it; secondly, that it made for the secularization of the Sabbath and people would soon use the sacred hours to write for their own profit and amusement; thirdly, the teaching of writing was a distinct incentive to the crime of forgery. It was long before many schools took it up.[5]

In Denmark the adult education movement started with a country pastor, N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872). Grundtvig believed that the hope of the future lay in the education of adults, who were the key to the opportunity for children and young people and in whose hands rested community and national life. He was ably assisted by Kristen Kold. These men always kept the spiritual emphasis prominent. Man was a spiritual being, and education, to be effective in the best sense, must help the individual to enter into the spiritual heritage of the race. Grundtvig's creed may be summed up in two tenets: " (1) Only through unwavering faith in a living God can the spirit of man thrive, and (2) only through absolute freedom to emulate the glory of his forefathers can a man uphold the integrity of his country." [6]

[5] See G. Currie Martin, *The Adult School Movement.*

[6] Pamelia P. Jones, " The Danish Folk High School." *School and Society,* August 8–15, 1936, p. 187.

In Denmark the issue of this early movement was the folk high schools, which have taken on different characteristics as need required. It is estimated that a third of all the people in Denmark have at some time or other attended one of the folk high schools or an agricultural school. Educators from all over the world have visited Denmark to learn what has been done for the enrichment of the life of a whole people through adult education.[7]

### 3. The Significance of the Adult Education Movement to the Church.

The significance of the world-wide adult education movement to the church is apparent to any thoughtful Christian. The thinking of millions of adults in America is being directed to new adventures in educational experience. *Why Stop Learning?* and *Lifelong Education* are more than mere book titles. They have become powerful slogans. The extensiveness of the movement and its influence upon organized society bids fair to surpass the proud record of American education in the high school and college field. The wide variety of agencies involved, the effectiveness with which many of them are helping adults into more abundant living, the values conserved and developed, the significant and even thrilling experiments being successfully carried on — all these things challenge the Christian church, and especially the Christian educator as he has seldom been challenged.

The sheer size of the adult education enterprise outside the church constitutes a challenge. In the 1936 *Handbook of Adult Education,* published by the American Association for Adult Education, is a brief summary of what is going on in this field in the United States. The book contains 423 closely printed pages; 389 of those pages are used for brief descriptions of various adult education agencies and enterprises.

Statistics are fairly hazardous. With full recognition of this fact, Dr. Morse Cartwright, on the basis of actual data and some very conservative estimates, submits the following figures:

[7] For an extended account, see *Democracy in Denmark,* by Josephine Goldmark and A. H. Hollmann.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN CONTINUING (NOT SPORADIC) ADULT EDUCATION ENTERPRISES IN AMERICA [8]

| | *1924* | *1934* | *1938* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Agricultural Extension | 5,000,000 | 6,000,000 | 7,000,000 |
| Alumni Education | 1,000 | 11,000 | 25,000 |
| Art and Museums | 5,000 | 30,000 | 40,000 |
| Community Organization | 500 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Private Correspondence Schools | 2,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,250,000 |
| Courses in Adult Education | | 1,000 | 3,000 |
| Organizations of Foreign Born | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| Open Forums | 250,000 | 250,000 | 500,000 |
| Library Adult Education | 200,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Lyceums and Chautauquas | 3,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Men's and Women's Clubs | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,250,000 |
| Music | 1,000 | 6,000 | 10,000 |
| Negroes | | 5,000 | 7,500 |
| Parent Education | 15,000 | 60,000 | 100,000 |
| Prisoners | 3,000 | 10,000 | 15,000 |
| Public Schools | 1,000,000 | 1,500,000 | 2,000,000 |
| Radio Education | 500,000 | 5,000,000 | 7,000,000 |
| Recreation (Indoor) | 1,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 2,100,000 |
| Religious Groups | 150,000 | 200,000 | 300,000 |
| Settlements | 5,000 | 15,000 | 17,500 |
| Special Schools | 40,000 | 80,000 | 100,000 |
| Theaters, Puppets, et cetera | 1,000 | 5,000 | 15,000 |
| Training by Corporations | 100,000 | 50,000 | 60,000 |
| Training Leaders | | 3,000 | 5,000 |
| Unemployed (Relief) | | 2,250,000 | 2,250,000 |
| University Extension | 200,000 | 300,000 | 350,000 |
| Vocational Education (Adults) | 300,000 | 400,000 | 500,000 |
| Vocational Guidance (Adults) | 10,000 | 25,000 | 40,000 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | 60,000 | 80,000 | 90,000 |
| Workers' Education | 30,000 | 15,000 | 40,000 |
| | 14,881,500 | 22,311,000 | 27,083,000 |

Note that the 1938 totals are double those of 1924. These figures indicate that one fifth of our total population is involved in these enterprises. The total school population is 36,000,000 children. The number engaged in adult education activities was in 1938 not far below the number in our public schools. There is every reason to believe that these numbers have greatly increased in later years.

What does such an adult education movement cost? For the ten years 1924–1934, Cartwright says that a conservative estimate of cost is two billion dollars a year. That means twenty to twenty-

[8] Data for 1924 and 1934 from *Ten Years of Adult Education*, p. 60. The Macmillan Company, 1935. Used by permission. 1938 figures from Morse A. Cartwright's *Annual Director's Report*, 1937–1938.

four billions of dollars for ten years' upkeep — quite a large sum. Yet, this is only an expenditure of ten dollars per person, and we do well to remember that, with the exception of the Government expenditures in FERA, in PWA, and other alphabetical projects, all this money was paid by the ultimate consumer or was contributed by private subscription.

### 4. Contributions the Church Has to Make.

While the adult education movement has paid little or no attention to the church, there are some things, however, for which it may well look to the church. There are also some things which those of us who are interested in the church believe that the church can do and must do in relation to the movement:

*a. Show a real concern about a common movement.* An enterprise involving so many people, which is fostered by so many agencies, costing two billions of dollars a year, exclusive of Government subsidy, is surely something of which the church must take serious account. It is a movement fraught with tremendous significance to the church, which thus far has shown too little concern about what has been going on in the so-called secular field.

One result of the situation is the increasing " secular " emphasis in the whole adult education movement. This fact in itself should arouse the church to action. What tragedy lies ahead of us if adult education goes forward in ways already definitely laid out and either pushes religion into the background or ignores it altogether? What will happen if adults go on learning in every area of life and experience and stand still religiously? What is the church going to do about this movement which has started significantly outside the church, which is going forward in practical disregard of the church, and which is largely being ignored by the church today?

The church can be aware of what is going on, can co-operate with worthy enterprises to the fullest possible extent, and can encourage church people to share in them.

*b. Meet the situation of an increasing body of knowledge in every other area of life with a correspondingly challenging op-*

*portunity for learning in the realm of religion.* In a day when great emphasis is being placed upon adult education in social, political, economic, industrial, and every other area, a special responsibility is laid upon the church as teacher. The whole world has become a schoolroom. Through newspaper, magazine, and radio, learners of every age are eagerly appropriating to themselves the truth, the half-truth, and the " no-truth." Out of this maze and mixture of learnings there is much that is immeasurably enriching life. All of it is putting people into contact with areas of life and experience hitherto reserved for comparatively few. If we are not to have lopsided or fragmentary personalities, the church must do its part, not only to provide opportunity for, but actually to lead people into, adventures in new areas of religious life and experience, to say nothing of new areas of religious knowledge. A person of untutored mind may have little religious knowledge and a very simple theology without either of these facts particularly imperiling his faith. But suppose that that person's mind is developing in every other way while his theology and his Christian life and experience are static. What, then, will happen to his faith? What will happen to *him?* Most of all, what will happen to those whom he may try to influence from the standpoint of religion and the church?

Another phase of this matter concerns us. There can never be any satisfactory and adequate program of Christian education in the home, the church, or the community, if adults hold strange and peculiar views of God, of the universe, of religious faith and doctrine, either because of wrong or imperfect teaching or because at some point along the way growth and development have been arrested or warped. The church must meet this situation by seeing to it that the program in its particular field, that of religion, not only compares favorably with what is going on in every other field of endeavor but actually excels them all. Only so shall we find a way " to cleanse the dreams of old men so that the visions seen by young men will not turn into bitterness. ' Whoso neglects learning in his youth, loses the past and is dead for the future '

and Euripides might have added, Whoso neglects learning in old age contaminates the present." [9]

Some contributions the church will make along with other agencies co-operating, but not in religion. Here the church alone must do whatever is done. It dare not fail here. If it does, no existing agency can step into the breach.

*c. Demonstrate that education means "changing people's lives."* Education does not consist in stuffing people's minds with facts. It means changing their lives through what they have been helped to know. What do we mean by Christian education? Does it consist in packing people's minds with religious truth? The answer is, "No." Christian education is the enterprise of so stimulating and guiding the lives of growing persons that through the power of the Holy Spirit they may be changed into an increasing likeness to Jesus Christ. It includes all those methods and procedures by which we may most effectively co-operate with God in developing Christlike persons, persons who will eagerly devote themselves and their talents to bringing in that Kingdom of God of which Jesus spoke and for which he gave his life.

Twelve men met Jesus of Nazareth. For three years they fellowshiped with their Teacher. Their lives were changed by this contact; endowed by the Holy Spirit, they went out, eleven of them, to change the world. Even at the time when their Master left them, as far as his physical presence was concerned, there were many things that they did not know. In fact, Jesus frequently chided them for their slowness of apprehension and their failure to learn the great truths of the Kingdom. Yet he was willing to stake his whole enterprise upon what had taken place within their personalities as they gave themselves in devoted loyalty to him and his cause. Through living with their Teacher, sharing, as far as they were able, in his experiences and purposes, in his dreams and his labors, their own personalities had taken on certain characteristics which led people who came in touch with them to take "knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

[9] E. C. Lindeman, *The Meaning of Adult Education,* p. 43.

It was perfectly evident in the lives and actions of these followers, untutored though they were from many standpoints, that they had indeed been *his* disciples (learners). They were, in their own changed personalities, living proofs of Jesus' purpose and his plan for the establishing of his Father's Kingdom.

Conscious of that same commission and dominated by that same purpose, the church and Christian leaders go forth, confident that the same Spirit is operating with power in the hearts and lives of men today, and that now, as then, Christ's followers are to become the agents, the instruments, of the divine purpose and plan.

*d. Assert anew the " continuingness " of the educational process and experience.* Education is not something to be " got over," to be " finished " or " completed," in order that life may begin. The new conception of education as a process which continues as long as life lasts is something in which we may well rejoice. Nor is this point of view strange to the church, which has ever held the idea that spiritual growth is something which goes on and on and continues even into the life beyond this one.

The church does, however, need to affirm this faith anew and to put its tenets into practice in its program. It is the follower of the One who ever talked about the " abundant " life. He invited those who had the courage and the purpose to follow him to yield themselves to the Holy Spirit, who was to guide them " into all the truth."

The Apostle Paul caught the meaning of this great fact, and in a passage of passion and eloquence declared that as the believer yields himself to the spirit of Christ the power of Christ will transform him from one stage of spiritual growth to another, " from glory to glory," until he is changed into the very image of the One whose he is and whom he follows. Well may the church which bears Christ's name joyously and positively assert the fact of the continuingness of the process by which human life is to be transformed unto the perfect man, " unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

*e. Undergird our changing modern life with concrete and commanding moral and spiritual ideals and values.* What is done at this point must be done by the church if it is to be done at all. Here is a contribution which only the church can make.

Someone, reading this, is likely to say: "We are tired of being told that we live in a period of transition and an age of change. To characterize any period as one of transition and change tells us nothing. What we need to do is to discover the *kind* of transition that is taking place, the sort of change that is going on." As we face our day, we are pretty sure that we know something of what is taking place. Terrific changes are taking place at the point of personal and social values. For example, the entire personalities of men and women, yes, and of young people and even children, are being drawn into and used up by machinery. We not only permit this; we seem to encourage it. Our sense of personal values has changed, and needs to change some more and in a different direction.

What shall we say about the dominance of the acquisitive motive as a mainspring in life? This acquisitive motive spreads itself out and is today at the center of every festering sore the world around. Consider the ways in which even our educational endeavors are becoming commercialized. Note how great potential goods, such as the moving picture and the radio, are prostituted in many instances to questionable if not evil purposes. By all these things is the quality of life being diluted. The changes that have come have reached into the very center of our being. Our personal and social values have changed — they are not what they were at one time, they are not what they ought to be now.

When one adds to all the forces which attack from "without the walls" the fact that in a large degree our inner certainties are broken down, the situation becomes even more serious. Our fathers and mothers had something that we, with all our getting, do not have. They were *sure of something*. Some things were *certain* for them. They could probe their experiences because they had experiences to probe. They were able to hear addresses and

not lose their faith. They could read books and articles and not be disquieted in religion. Perhaps they ought to have been more easily disturbed. We may say, and sometimes we do say, that they were narrow, they were bigoted, *but they had something — something that we lack and that we desperately need.*

All about us in these terrible, these great days, are evidences of the realization that we have *lost something.* There is a wistful search for certainty, a hunger for the revelation and discovery of reality, a thirst for the things that have eternal value and abide. We are learning anew that if life is to be lived at its highest and best there must be some focal point, some conception of value, some moral and religious ideals to which we may hold, which *do hold us* and which may become the integrating center for all our experience. It is here that our Christian faith, and the church as a means thereto, must make the supreme contribution. Shall men turn in vain to the one agency which should be in position to help them to more satisfying and dynamic living? Are they to come hungry and thirsty to the fountain, only to find it dry, or to discover that the stream of what should be life-giving water flows so sluggishly that it is flat and undrinkable?

In a day when there is so much emphasis upon physical things and material things, men look to the church for a correspondingly strong and positive emphasis upon spiritual values. The way out is not by deprecating material things. We must rather put material things in their proper place with reference to all that is of eternal value. From many standpoints, as Dr. L. P. Jacks says, " the way to spiritual things lies *through* material things and not *around* them." No agency can help us as can the church, to seek " first his kingdom, and his righteousness " in order that all other things may take their proper place in relation to this great central idea and value.

Adults are awaiting the leadership and direction of their churches. The church must not fail them. They shall not look in vain for the clarification of those moral and spiritual values which are needed supremely today if our modern life is to be

so undergirded as to save it and make it worth saving for ourselves and posterity.

### 5. The Challenge to the Church and to Adults.

Well has J. H. Oldham said, "If the church could be what it exists to be, the spiritual leadership of the world is in its hands."

One of the most striking and most thrilling of all conceptions of the church is the one which appears in the New Testament. This conception is that the church "exists to be" — that it is — the body of Christ, the only body he has on earth, the instrument for the accomplishment of his purposes among men. If the church is to fulfill Christ's purpose, its members, each according to his capacity, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, must seek to learn that purpose. Each member must be led into suitable and increasingly significant opportunities for enlarging his understanding and appreciation of that high purpose and a satisfying participation in carrying it out. In this enterprise adults must lead.

The pastor of a church in the West remarked that to him the most discouraging aspect of the whole life and work of the church was the fact — at least he called it a fact — that adults in the average church are so undeveloped spiritually and are utterly incapable of undertaking serious study of vital religious problems and thinking those problems through. He further stated that adults are not even willing to try to become capable.

Over against this picture let us record the perfectly amazing response pastors are getting when adults are invited to enter into an earnest and purposeful and challenging investigation of some problem which is vital to them.

A Midwestern pastor had a group of more than a hundred young married people studying together the problem of "Parents as Teachers of Christian Living." A pastor in the East met with his "younger set," at teas in the various homes where the women gathered simply to *read through the New Testament.* They started with The Acts, fitting in the Epistles where they properly

met the problems arising in the churches Paul founded. There was no preaching, and just enough explanation to make clear the situations faced. They read aloud and from Moffatt's Translation.

The writer cannot escape the conviction that pastors and teachers, himself included, have failed to appreciate the eager desire of adults to be guided and helped by someone whose knowledge and experience is wider than their own. Perhaps we have failed because we have tried to make it all too easy for them. Adults are grown up. To be sure, they have not all had the superior opportunities now afforded to the younger generation. But just the same, they are adults. They want to do their own work. They have lived and experienced, and it is out of life that expression comes. Interestingly enough, we have tended in the church to provide " expression activities " for children and attempted to educate adults by sermons and highly didactic Bible and other classes. Then we have wondered why adults do not respond. Is there not a better way? Even a cursory study of what is going on in the various fields of adult education reveals the fact that adults are responding to learning opportunities which " find them where they are." We may well take heart and go forward, planning largely, and wisely.

### 6. Summary.

The church has a large stake in the adult education movement and a great contribution to make to it. It is our firm conviction that the church can and must enter aggressively into the adult education field with a program of its own for the Christian education of adults. That program will be designated to meet adult spiritual needs. It will be so vital and challenging as to intrigue those within the church and to reach out to and lay hold upon those men and women who are as yet outside its life, work, and influence. It is such a program which is envisaged in this book, one which will place the emphasis upon continuous growth, with ever-enlarging activity in helping others, young and old, to grow. Such

a program will see the church as a great fellowship of growing Christians who are achieving new levels of faith and life, with provision made for the stimulation and guidance of the various stages of development. Only by providing such a program can the church take its place and do its part in the current movement of adult education.

**Note.** — Materials "For Further Thought and Investigation" for each chapter and a "Bibliography" arranged by chapters will be found in Appendix V, pp. 190 ff., and Appendix VI, pp. 197 ff., respectively.

## Chapter II

# THE CHURCH'S PURPOSE IN ADULT EDUCATION

### 1. The Importance of Defining Our Purpose.

Every experience through which a person passes has some effect upon his life. Consequently we may say that all experiences have educational significance for good or for ill. To be most effective in changing people's lives those experiences need to be under control and if they are to give maximum guidance and direction to life they should be purposeful. While some results, and even beneficial ones, may occur in connection with incidental or accidental experiences, it is through directed and purposive activity that the largest results are *attained* or achieved.

What folly it would be to equip completely a great modern ship with engines, propellers, cargo, passengers, and crew, and send her out to sea without a port to sail toward or a rudder to steer her!

Is it any less folly for a group of church leaders to start out upon their task without sitting down together and deciding what they are undertaking to accomplish as they carry out the Master's commission to "go . . . make disciples"?

It has been estimated that with all the accuracy of range-finding and of aiming modern guns, in the first World War a thousand shots were required to hit a man. One is tempted to ask the question, "How many hits would have been scored if the guns had not been aimed at all?"

Church leaders, if they are really in earnest and taking their task seriously, need to have before them specific goals or objectives which describe in concrete terms what they are trying to accomplish through their efforts.

At this point, we who work together in the church need to guard ourselves. It is quite possible for us to become so interested

in and concerned about the *subject* or *subjects* of religion that we neglect our *object* or lose sight of it altogether. We may teach so many classes, or preach so many sermons, or participate in so many discussions about religion that we forget or lose our clear vision of the purpose of the very thing we are talking about.

There is a well-known metaphysical doctrine that a *subject* without an *object* is an unthinkable absurdity. That doctrine has a vital application to the work of the church. If we as church leaders should find ourselves teaching a subject without an object, we may well ask ourselves, " Are we not largely wasting our time? " Of course, the successful teacher or preacher must know his subject — that is of vital importance — but he must at the same time know and keep clearly before him the object for which the subject is being taught. These two things must never be divorced. They must both be kept in mind at the same time. They are the two foci of the ellipse of true education and true religion. Unless the object is achieved, we have failed, no matter how hard we have tried to teach our subject.

### 2. What Are Educational Objectives?

Educational objectives are the results which the Christian leader desires to see achieved in the lives of persons by means of the activities and experiences in and through which they are guided. The objectives need to be commonly understood and agreed upon if the program is to be most effective. They should be clearly and concretely stated if they are to be guides in building and administering the church program.

### 3. Two Types of Objectives.

For convenience we may speak of two types of objectives: the *ultimate or comprehensive* objectives and the *immediate or specific* objectives.

By a comprehensive objective we mean, for instance, that the program of the church should help to establish the Kingdom of God; or we indicate that the purpose of the church is the develop-

ment of Christlike character. These are general statements which are made on the basis of our philosophy of the Christian life. They are called comprehensive objectives because they comprehend a large number of specific steps which must be taken if the general or ultimate goal is to be realized.

Immediate or specific objectives are those desired results in the lives of the growing person which constitute steps to be taken if the more general or comprehensive objectives are to be realized. They are the immediate steps. They describe the desired outcomes or results in terms of particular situations in which growth is desired and sought.

If we say, for instance, that the comprehensive objective is a growing Christian character, then one specific objective will be respect for the property of others. Another specific objective will be the practice of returning lost property to its owner if that owner can be found. These objectives are stated in terms of definite activities, which, if mastered, will help the learner to move in the direction of the achievement of the comprehensive objective. Our program of work is necessarily based upon them. While the comprehensive objective states the general purpose and helps us to keep before our minds the whole of which the specific activity is a part, the specific objective indicates the next step or steps to be taken in light of the learner's condition and needs.

When, on the basis of our Christian philosophy, we have stated the general and comprehensive major elements or aspects of the Christian life, then we must make these major principles concrete and quantitative and immediate in terms of the present life of the learner and his needs for growth. To do this we will, as scientifically as possible, study society and individual activities; we will study the people with whom we are dealing and discover their stage of advancement or of retrogression and develop a program in terms of the most practical and immediate steps to be taken that the general purposes of the church may be achieved in their lives.

While it is not always easy to draw a sharp dividing line be-

tween comprehensive and specific objectives, we shall do well to keep the distinction between them as clear as we can. The first involve the essence and purpose of the Christian religion. The second are a part of the learner's life situation and are the immediate goals which he desires to achieve. The two types are not substitutes for each other. They are complementary. We need both if we are to have any adequate statement of the goals or outcomes of Christian education.

In our discussion in this chapter we are primarily concerned with the comprehensive objectives.

### 4. How Do Comprehensive Objectives Help Leader and Learner?

To have clearly stated, concrete objectives which are commonly understood and agreed upon is a tremendous advantage. It helps the preacher, the teacher, and any other leader. It also helps the learner whom we are trying to influence through our church program.

From the standpoint of the leader, be that leader preacher, teacher, or administrator, there are at least five ways in which we are helped by having clear-cut objectives.

*a. Objectives point the direction in which we are to guide the learner.* Without such help we shall simply flounder from one point to another. The contractor who has his blueprints, plans, and specifications can face piles of brick, bags of mortar, heaped-up stone, and loads of lumber, and know how to put them together with the desired result.

*b. Objectives help to give sequence to educational experience and help us to move from one point to another with a cumulative effect.* Only if we have definite aims can we know what to do next with a view to achieving these ends.

*c. Definite objectives help us to determine the content of our program.* They guide us in the selection of both the materials we should use and the activities we should employ. If, for instance, our objective is to teach the history of the divided Kingdom of

Israel, then the materials we will use and the procedures we will follow will be different from those we would employ if our purpose were to help a group of adults to practice Christian friendship toward people of other races. When we have a clear end in view, some things will help and some will not help to that end. Thus program follows purpose, and in line with our purpose we build the program and select the materials which go into it.

*d. Objectives determine the method we use in teaching.* If we are desirous of imparting information about the history of the church, we proceed in one way. If we are endeavoring to help people into a more vital personal fellowship with God, we use an appropriate method. If our purpose is to bring people to a decision for Jesus Christ, we take still another way of accomplishing our purpose. When we go about showing adults how to conduct family worship with helpfulness to themselves and their children, we will proceed in a different way from that which we should use to develop a sense of appreciation of the beautiful in religious art or music.

*e. Objectives make it possible for us to measure the results of our efforts and to discover whether we are making progress or not.* They also help us to discover the degree of progress we have made. Our objectives provide measuring rods which tell us how far we have gone or indicate that we have not progressed far from our starting point. Only with reference to some definite objective can we measure achievement.

To sum up: Comprehensive objectives help the teacher or leader to do five things: determine the direction, the sequence, the content, the method, and the results in success or failure of his church's program.

From the standpoint of the learner, the objective represents the reason for engaging in the particular educational activity. Unless the learner, be he old or young, *wants* to achieve, and enters wholeheartedly and purposefully into the learning process or into the activity, he will not learn to the best advantage and with the greatest facility. Learning is not simply a repetition of what has been or

of what is. It is the creative participation by the leader and the learner in a common undertaking, through which new levels of living may be achieved. It was in this spirit and by this method that Jesus dealt with his disciples. It was through this sort of experience that their lives were so changed that they went out, as a result, and changed the world. When a leader so stimulates and guides those whom he would influence that they and he enter together upon a common quest, then will that leader be most successful.

A pastor was leading a group of adults in discussing the deeper things of the Christian life. They were asking, "How far are we to go in following Jesus Christ today?" They agreed that to be really Christian we must put the principles of Jesus into practice in daily life. It was proposed that the group should fix upon some far-reaching principle, such as that of forgiveness of those who injure us, or of going the second mile, or of doing to others as we would have them do to us, and then put that principle to the test of experimental practice to see how it actually works out in modern life. All agreed to try for two weeks to forgive those who did them wrong. At the end of that time it was the unanimous opinion that more time should be given so that all might have the experience of a definite case of Christian forgiveness, and receive the thrill of satisfaction which had come to those who had tried the thing out.

The project became a real means of growth, and no wonder! This was an ideal *learning situation.* It meant common agreement upon a definite objective to be sought experimentally, and then checking up on the experience and evaluating it as a means to future living.

The objectives constitute the common purpose of the Christian leader and the learner. If we have no clear-cut purpose, the process will have little meaning. With a definite goal in view, it is possible to initiate purposeful activity, all in line with our objective. If leader and learner know where they want to go, there is more possibility of getting there.

**5. Varying Conceptions of the Church's Main Objectives.**

Down to the present day, the church has made different emphases at different times and on different occasions. It is interesting to note how these major emphases have varied and what some of them have been and are. We shall discover how they relate themselves to our objectives today. But first let us look at some of them as they have appeared from time to time.

*a. There has been what we may call the New Testament aim.* That aim is best expressed in the Great Commission in Matt. 28: 19, 20. It is best illustrated by looking at the days when Christianity was new.

The early church lived in a pagan world. Converts were to become learners of the Christian way, a way quite different from the one which they were accustomed to follow. This meant a process of induction into the new way, into the church and its practices. Therefore, the early church had a period of instruction and practice during which the catechumens, as they were called, were to learn about Christ and what he expected them to do, and were to prove in their everyday life that they belonged to him. Probably at no period has the church been more effective in its program of Christian education than was the early church at the time when every follower of Jesus had to prove by his life that he knew what it meant to be a Christian in a hostile world.

*b. Then there has been the ecclesiastical aim.* For a thousand years after Constantine (A.D. 325) the major emphasis was upon building up the ecclesiastical institution. What education there was was for monks and priests. The church failed to teach its members. No wonder that the Dark Ages followed!

Somewhat akin to this emphasis is that of *building up the church as an institution.* The church needs new members if it is to continue. We must, therefore, have a program which will secure recruits. We must support the Sunday School because it is the chief recruiting ground for new members who will build up the church.

*c. The Bible aim came to the forefront with the dissemination of the Scriptures, with their translation into the vernacular, and with the invention of the printing press.* The emphasis upon the importance of reading and understanding the Bible led to its becoming the focal point of Christian education.

*d. The doctrinal aim, the aim of enforcing correct belief, was especially prominent at the time of the Reformers.* Each one of them wrote his particular creed and enunciated his special doctrine. People were to learn the doctrines and subscribe to this one or that one. The test of the Christian life was adherence. This idea is carried over today in a similar emphasis upon the importance of subscription to creedal or doctrinal statements and the tendency, in some quarters, to read out of the group those who will not thus subscribe.

A variant is the presentation of the doctrine in theologically formulated catechetical statements which are to be memorized by the young. The theory is that these items of sheer memory are to be stored away for future reference, even though they mean little now. Someday, in a semimiraculous way, they will be understood and appreciated.

*e. A fifth aim has been to win converts and to save souls out of the world.* These souls are as brands snatched from the burning. The emphasis is thus placed upon one particular item of religious experience. The processes that lead up to conversion, and must follow it if the life is to be rich and full, are sometimes neglected or minimized. The schools of the church tend to be " inspirational " rather than " educational " in nature and in emphasis.

*f. Another prominent aim is that of preparing for the future life.* In the New England primer, used in the colonial schools — public schools they were too — one finds such lines as these:

" I in the burying place may see
Graves shorter there than I.
From death's arrest no age is free;
Young children too may die.

My God! May such an awful sight
Awakening be to me!
O that by early grace I might
For death preparèd be! "

The early Puritan marveled no less than some of his quite distant descendants at irreligion among the young and sought to counteract that tendency in the emphasis upon preparation for future life.

What shall we say about such aims as these? Have these emphases been wrong? Have they been misplaced?

Our answer to both questions is, " No." Every one of these aims has had and perhaps still has value. The difficulty has been overemphasis on one or another with corresponding underemphasis on the rest. This means lack of balance, often a warped or one-sided point of view.

Our objectives must be broad enough to include at the same time all aspects of the Christian's life. They must be inclusive rather than exclusive.

### 6. In What Terms Shall We State Our Objectives?

Objectives may be stated in terms of individual changes or of social changes. Again, objectives may be statements of outcomes in character, or desired conduct to be achieved as the result of the church's program of Christian education. Or we may formulate our purposes in terms of qualities of personality which describe the kind of person we believe will fulfill the meaning of the adjective " Christian."

However we formulate our goals, let us be as consistent as possible in making our statements from the same point of view. This makes for clarity and avoids confusion. In general, several things may be said about any statement or statements that we may make of the ultimate aim or objective of Christian education.

*a. The ultimate aim must be spiritual and stated in spiritual terms.* Any program of education that fails to stimulate and

guide a genuine religious experience may be education, but it is not religious and it certainly is not Christian education.

The only layman ever asked, to date, to deliver at Yale the Lyman Beecher Lectures on preaching was George Wharton Pepper, prominent lawyer and distinguished Episcopal layman of Philadelphia, who designated the 1915 series "A Voice from the Crowd." Mr. Pepper declares that there are no such things as secular and religious education. He says:

"We refuse to concede that the individual is constructed upon the longitudinal bulkhead plan — with the world on one side of a division wall and God on the other. His life is not supposed to be a life of divided allegiance, part of his time being given to God and part to mammon. Upon the Christian theory, to know God is the end and aim of existence. The process of attaining to this knowledge is education. Subtract God and you get, not secular education, but no education at all. . . . Upon the Christian theory there are no subjects of study which are in their nature secular. A better way of saying the same thing is to assert that a Christian teacher, really in earnest about the coming of the Kingdom, would use the teaching of every subject as an opportunity to reveal God to the child." [1]

What Mr. Pepper says about teaching children is no less true of adults. If we are to have any objectives for Christian education, those objectives should be in terms of relating all of life to God. Our spiritual purpose must be kept paramount.

*b. The ultimate aim must be in terms of growing and developing Christian persons.* When we ask, "What is the object of the church's efforts?" a ready answer is, "Results in the lives of people." The test of success is the difference made in the persons the church tries to influence. We want our "learners" to master the lesson, to hear and heed the sermon, to read and study the book, to take the course, to know their Bibles, because *these things make a difference in life.* The changed life of the learner is the purpose of every effort that the church puts forth. How far are lives being

[1] G. W. Pepper, *A Voice from the Crowd,* pp. 100, 102. Used by permission of Yale University Press.

changed and made different and transformed as a result of what we have done in co-operation with God? That is the real test. Human life is a thing of growth, of becoming. This is what is meant by making the school "child-centered" and the program "life-centered." The primary consideration in the process is the learner himself, and what happens in his life as a result of the efforts of the church as teacher. The *object* of the program is his changed life.

*c. The ultimate aim must include all phases of the life of the learner.* Religion is not merely a part of life, it is coterminous with life. We are not religious simply because we dedicate one seventh of our time and one tenth of our income to God. All we are and have belongs to him. Therefore, in stating the objective of the church's program, all phases of life are included: physical, mental, social, spiritual, the life of the individual, of society, of the family, the church, the community, the world.

*d. The ultimate aim must include both conservation and reformation.* The exponents of Christian education are accused frequently of either denying the validity and the importance of regeneration or of minimizing it. No program of Christian education can be Christian and do either of these things. The Christian educator must squarely meet the charge that he is "substituting education for evangelism." We must seek to understand what was in the mind of the evangelist who is reported to have said that if he had $10,000 he would invest $9,999.99 in evangelism and one cent in religious education.

Evangelism is the one supreme purpose of the church. It is the *end,* the *object,* of our efforts. Christian education is a means to that end. Let us not confuse means and ends. And let us never lose sight of the ultimate purpose of every effort we exert. Dr. A. J. W. Myers has well said that "educational evangelism is a reverent attempt to understand God's laws of human growth and development and intelligently to co-operate with him in carrying out his purpose, that all may consciously and gladly love him." [2]

[2] A. J. W. Myers, *Educational Evangelism,* p. 10. National Sunday School Union.

### 7. The International Council of Religious Education States Seven Comprehensive Objectives.

Such a comprehensive statement of objective as has been suggested above is so general that it must be broken down into its component parts if it is to be useful in determining and guiding the church program. It needs elaboration in terms of the various elements that go into the development of Christlike persons.

In the International Council of Religious Education some forty denominations unite in a co-operative effort with representatives from practically every state in the Union and from the provinces of Canada. This group, on the basis of such study as is indicated in the preceding section of this chapter, published in 1930, a statement of seven objectives, which was adopted "as the basic document for curriculum work, subject to revision from time to time as further experience may make desirable."

These objectives are formulated in terms of what the Christian leader seeks to foster or develop or effect in growing persons. Each of the seven is followed by quite detailed elaboration. The statements, minus the elaborations of each, are quoted below.[3]

THE SEVEN OBJECTIVES OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

I. Christian religious education seeks to foster in growing persons a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience, and a sense of personal relationship to him.

II. Christian religious education seeks to develop in growing persons such an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teaching of Jesus as will lead to experience of him as Saviour and Lord, loyalty to him and his cause, and manifest itself in daily life and conduct.

III. Christian religious education seeks to foster in growing persons a progressive and continuous development of Christlike character.

[3] For the complete statement see The International Curriculum Guide, Book One, *Principles and Objectives of Christian Education,* pp. 8–16. Used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

IV. Christian religious education seeks to develop in growing persons the ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the building of a social order throughout the world, embodying the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

V. Christian religious education seeks to develop in growing persons the ability and disposition to participate in the organized society of Christians — the church.

VI. Christian religious education seeks to lead growing persons into a Christian interpretation of life and the universe; the ability to see in it God's purpose and plan; a life philosophy built on this interpretation.

VII. Christian religious education seeks to effect in growing persons the assimilation of the best religious experience of the race, pre-eminently that recorded in the Bible, as effective guidance to present experience.

## 8. The Seven Objectives in Terms of Adult Christian Education.

Soon after the International Council of Religious Education had adopted and publicized the seven objectives of religious education, the Committee on the Religious Education of Adults (an age group committee of the International Council of Religious Education, familiarly known as C.R.E.A.) began to promote the seven objectives intensively with a view to their utilization for adult Christian education. It was soon discovered by leaders of adult work that there should be more explicit understanding of these seven objectives at three points in particular:

First, the term "growing persons" should be understood to mean adults as well as children and young people.

Secondly, none of the seven objectives seemed to deal specifically with family life and parenthood — the Christian home.[4]

[4] To meet this situation C. R. E. A. prepared a statement of objective dealing with Christian family life. This statement is quoted in this book as Appendix I, p. 177–179.

It should be noted that in making the latest restatement of objectives in *Christian Education Today,* pp. 16, 17, there is included a new objective: "VI.

Thirdly, objective IV, on the social order, needed to be understood as meaning that a growing person and the groups and conditions in which he lives are interdependent. Groups change as persons change, but persons change as their groups change. While it is true that ideal persons will form an ideal society, it is also true that these persons grow only in group life and are conditioned by group codes and patterns.

The results of study at these three points produced constructive action. "Growing persons" were to be understood as including adults. A new objective on the Christian family was created and proposed. The reader will find it printed in full in Appendix I of this book. To express more fully the relationship between the individual and the group in the social order, an elaborated statement was made of objective IV. The reader will find this elaboration printed in full in Appendix II of this book, pp. 179–182.

### 9. A Denominational Statement of Adult Objectives.

In the preceding section we learned how the co-operating denominations of the International Council of Religious Education worked out a usable statement of adult objectives. It was understood, however, that each co-operating denomination was still free to restate these adult objectives for its own constituency. Inasmuch as the writer participated in the formulation of such a statement in his own denomination, and because it is the only complete restatement in adult terms of the seven objectives of which he knows, space will be taken to reprint the document as Appendix III in this book, pp. 183–187.

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Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons an appreciation of the meaning and importance of the Christian family, and the ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the life of this primary social group." The last two objectives are renumbered VII and VIII.

## Chapter III

# HOW DOES RELIGIOUS GROWTH TAKE PLACE?

### 1. What Makes Different People "Different"?

What makes different people different? One answer is heredity. There are hereditary factors which set every person off from every other as far as personality is concerned and as far as physical factors are concerned. Hereditary factors are beyond our control. They must be accepted whether they are advantages or handicaps. They cannot be ignored, nor can they be changed.

A second answer to our question is that, apart from hereditary differences, the thing that makes one person different from another is a difference in experience. The basic difference between an adolescent and an adult is not age, nor weight, nor inches. The adult has had experiences in which he has learned; the adolescent's experiences are for the most part ahead of him.

It is the same thing that makes the difference between two adults. Two persons face the situation of serious illness of a loved one. One of them is frantic and almost beside himself. He does not know what to do, and wastes time, courage, and strength in aimless and fruitless efforts. The other is just as concerned, but he coolly marshals all the resources of the home, of medical skill, and of religion, that the loved one may be restored. What is the difference? The first has either had little or no experience with illness or has never profited by these opportunities for growth if he has had them. The second has learned what to do and how to do it. His experience has *meant something*. That meaning has been preserved as knowledge and skills and attitudes which become means of control in the new experience as past experience is put to work in meeting and mastering a new situation. We may well say that these two situations of illness are faced by two different people made different as a result of past experiences.

Our most trustworthy psychologists now declare that it is the experience factor, even more than the hereditary factor, that determines our personalities and makes us all different. It is experience that develops personality. What we are is the result of the experiences through which we have passed. Different personalities are the result of different kinds of experience. "Experience might be called the matrix by which the self is formed. Rail-splitting played its part in the spirit of Lincoln. . . . Rail-splitting itself taught nothing; Lincoln's understanding of it was his instrument of growth." [1]

The truth of this statement may be further illustrated in the case of the same person. Often we say of an acquaintance, "Why, he is a totally different person!" How did he get that way? Was it not some experience or experiences that caused the change?

The writer has in mind a religious leader whom he knew for many years. He was a radiant person, of irrepressible and overflowing spirits. This man was in the first World War. For years his path did not cross the writer's. Then word came that this friend was to participate as a leader in a near-by conference. All who knew him looked forward to the meeting with eager expectation. But what a shock everyone had! More than one asked: "What has happened to ——? He seems like a different person." And he was a different person. The terrible experience of the war had done it.

Similar cases will readily be recalled by the reader out of his own contacts with people. How personalities have been altered by the experience of a great bereavement! How people have been changed until they were different persons as the result of entering upon a new line of work, or getting married and buying a home, or going to school again, or coming to have a new appreciation of literature, art, or music!

Perhaps one of the most profound and radical changes is known best of all by us who work in the church. We have seen what a

[1] David Seabury, *How to Worry Successfully*, p. 283.

profound change takes place in the personality of someone who has been traveling the lower roads of life and then gets soundly converted. Read such a book as Harold Begbie's *Twice-born Men* to see how the lives of men with different backgrounds were transformed through a conversion experience. Through such a radical conversion experience Saul of Tarsus became Paul the apostle and self-satisfied and self-seeking, complacent Wilfred Grenfell went to pour out his life in Labrador. Conversion and the experiences subsequent to conversion made them different persons. This is true, whether the change comes as the result of a more or less climacteric experience like Paul's or as the result of an experience extended, as was Timothy's, over a longer period of time. Countless adults have become new men or new women in Jesus Christ. They have passed through one of the most transforming experiences known.

### 2. The New Testament and the Christian Church Attest to the Fact that "Growth Comes Through Experience."

When Jesus wanted to teach Peter, and the rest, humility and the greatness of service, he did it by putting them in a situation in which they were practically forced to express some definite attitude. Jesus girded himself with a towel and actually shamed them all by doing himself that which the disciples were not willing to do. When the lesson was the importance of the little child, Jesus did not deliver a lecture on the subject. He waited until one day when mothers came bringing their little ones to him. Then, as the disciples protested and sought to drive the mothers away, Jesus took the children in his arms and proceeded to teach his followers that there was a better way than theirs of responding to children.

Sometimes the Master found the disciples in situations in which he *guided* them and *prompted* them and *suggested* to them or even *told* them. In every case he deliberately tried so to enrich their experiences that they might learn as much as possible. Sometimes he precipitated a situation or created a situation to which

they might respond. They, perhaps, did not realize what Jesus was doing, but as they looked back upon those precious years of fellowship they must have been amused at their own obtuseness and marveled at their Teacher's skill and admired his persistent efforts.

All through those three years Jesus was constantly and consciously getting his disciples into situations in which they might have the kind of experiences that would fit them for their great task. As he shared those experiences with them, he sought to guide them in such a way as to enrich their lives and to lead to mastery of the situations that they would meet as they went to carry out his Great Commission. Then, after a time "in school," he sent them out two by two that they might try their wings and actually have the experience of being apostles, sent as heralds of the Kingdom. When they came back, he took them to a place apart to talk over the experiences they had had and to help them to profit by their mistakes as well as their successes.

Of course, the most basic experience of all was that of intimate fellowship with their Leader. That, more than anything else and everything else, led to the transformation of the disciples' personalities.

All down through the years since Jesus walked and taught in the days of his flesh, the church has affirmed the central place of a personal Christian experience, and has more or less put its emphasis there. The modern adult educator and the church are surprisingly close together in this emphasis upon the fact that lives are changed through vital personal experience.[2]

In an emphasis upon the central place of a Christian religious experience, church leaders have tended sometimes to talk as though there were only one religious experience — that of conversion to Christ. In magnifying its crucial importance so much emphasis has been put upon conversion as to leave other experiences out of account altogether or push them far into the background. Then, because Christian educators have urged a broader base for the

[2] See pp. 20, 21.

Christian life, and insisted upon recognizing the values of all religious experiences, they have been accused of minimizing the importance of " conversion " and " the new birth."

Let us think clearly here and be utterly fair and frank. The writer knows many so-called " religious educators." He does not know one of any standing in the field who would minimize the importance or deny the validity or the essential place of what is generally understood as the " new birth " or " regeneration " or " conversion " experience. What Christian educators do object to is the tendency to lose sight of other significant experiences which are also a part of the Christian's life.

### 3. How Does Experience Come to Us, or How Do We Get It?

It now becomes necessary for us to look a little way into what we might call the " mechanics " of the learning process. In doing this we are reverently trying to see how God's laws operate as people learn. Let us bear in mind that God is always at work in every situation, whether the person recognizes that fact or not. We cannot leave God out of the process, for the process itself depends upon him. His universal laws are operating in the realm of things and in the realm of persons as well, to the end that persons may grow.

When we look at this process and seek to understand it, we find that there are three fundamental elements or factors involved in learning through our experience:

The first factor is *the situation* which stimulates the person to action of some kind or other. The situation may be simple, as a shot which causes us to start, or complex, as when one unexpectedly is faced with a difficult problem to solve. It may come from outside; it may come from within ourselves.

The second factor is *the response* which the person makes to the situation. Here again we may have either simple or complex responses. The blinking of an eye as a flashlight bulb goes off is a simple response compared with that of the minister who faces

the opposition of the officers of his church when he lays a concrete proposal before them.

The third factor is *the self,* the person who does the responding or who is capable of responding. He it is who has the experience, whose personality is affected and modified as he responds, who becomes a different person if the experience is profound enough. No response means no growth; some response means some growth; wholehearted response in the right direction means significant growth. If the particular experience leads on into a series or chain of situations, each evoking its appropriate response, it is likely to be more fruitful, provided the responses made are in the direction of higher or the highest values.

It is by facing such facts as these that we are led to say that people grow through their experiences. Experience comes to us as we respond to situations that stimulate us to action. Out of these responses, with their resulting deposit of experience, the personality is formed for good or for ill. Each expression of the right kind enriches the personality. On the other hand, each experience of the wrong kind demeans the person who has it.

### 4. What Do We Mean by "Learning"?

Let us for a few moments fix our attention upon the "self" — this acting, perceiving, organizing something that has experiences, that binds these experiences together and makes them a part of the personality, that gives them meaning and purpose and direction. This self is a seeing, feeling, willing, doing organism. It does all these things more or less with reference to life as a whole. It is the "more" or "less" which is the crux of the whole matter, for the self grows as it moves in the direction of the "more." The self may see more, may feel more, may decide on the basis of that larger knowledge, may find larger and finer ways of doing. In all these ways the self grows and may be helped to grow. This growth we think of as learning. If growth is taking place, learning is going on. Growth and learning are one and the same thing.

We have seen that experience arises in the process of meeting and responding to situations that stimulate us to action. There are several types or levels of response. The simplest is where the response is invariable, immediate, and practically beyond our control or direction. A reflex, such as the knee jerk, illustrates it well. In other cases the response is subject to control and direction. It is not immediate and invariable, but chosen deliberately out of a number of possibilities. The action is considered; judgment is employed. Here we have purposive, reflective action. This is the most complicated and the highest type of response. It opens the way for the largest degree of learning as well as the richest and most significant experience.

Opportunities for this type of learning experience are confronting us all the time as we meet situations. We may purposively select out of a given situation a particular aspect of it or element in it to which we respond. In doing this we are actually modifying the situation itself, and of course our choice affects the response. Again, whatever the situation may be, there are a variety of possible responses. As choices are made and the selected course or courses of action tried out, the way is open for education — for learning, for appreciation, for mastery, for control in the direction of higher levels of living and doing.

The choices are best made by the learner himself. He is the one who should have the experiences. We are after self-initiating personalities, persons who have self-direction in the right direction. While there may be wise guidance and direction, while the teacher or leader may enter into the experience at any point or at every point, he does so in such a way as to afford the largest possible degree of *learner* experience. The purpose of the teacher is to stimulate, to guide, to counsel, to encourage better and more fruitful ways of behaving.

This leads us to something that should be emphasized. No one has really *learned* in the fullest sense until he *does*. Ultimately, learning involves acquiring a new way of behaving. This is not any new doctrine. Far from it! Jesus said that it was not the

persons who glibly said, " Lord, Lord," but those who actually did the will of God who were inside the Kingdom. Again, he said that his followers were to go out and " make learners " of all with whom they came in contact, " teaching them to observe " all the things he had commanded. That " observe " does not mean just to look at or admire; it means *to do.*

When has a person " learned " the parable of the Good Samaritan? When he can repeat the story, with verbal accuracy, to a listener? No one has really learned the parable until he actually does the thing the Good Samaritan did.

John Ruskin was right when he said: " Education does not mean teaching people what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not now behave. It is not teaching the youth the shapes of the letters and the tricks of numbers, and then leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery, and their literature to lust. It means, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is painful, continual, and difficult work, to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise, but above all, by example." This is the ultimate meaning of any learning that is really significant. We have not really learned until we can size up a situation, bring forward data on what to do in it, have ability to act when the time comes to act, *and actually do something appropriate.* Part of the way of behaving is to know when the time comes. But it is not enough to *be able* to act when the time comes; we must really *do.* Only then do we give evidence of having *learned.*

It is clear at once that learning has to do, not with knowledge alone, but with all that is involved in meeting and mastering any situation that may arise. Attitudes and skills come in as well as knowledge. Let us illustrate. Knowledge about religion is one thing. It is quite another thing actually to live the Christian life in the situations with which adults are faced in these days. A person may, for instance, learn the catechism and Christian hymns; he may be familiar with creeds and prayers and rituals; he may

know the Bible from cover to cover. These are items of knowledge. But who would say that when a person knows these things he is, by virtue of that knowledge alone, a Christian? The question is not, "Does he know these things?" but, "How has this knowledge affected his life?" No culture can be defined in terms of what has passed into the mind. It must always be defined in terms of *the change that has come in the life as a result of the knowledge*. We should by no means minimize the value of these things that may be known and appreciated by the mind. We must remember, however, that these are not the ends sought, but rather the means to the great end — a transformed, changed person who has had an experience of religion and whose life is different by virtue of that experience.

An illustration from life may help more than further explanation. Some years ago the following story appeared in the *Student Volunteer Bulletin:*

A missionary was "in the country" and was examining a Chinese woman of seventy-three for baptism and admission to the church.

"Who is Jesus?" "Jesus died for me."

"How did he die?" "I don't know."

"Who were Jesus' disciples?" "I don't remember. I can't read."

"Do you know the names of any of the books of the Bible?" "When one can't read . . ."

"Where did Jesus live on earth?" Silence.

The missionary stopped, discouraged. The deacons saw that the old woman had made a very poor showing.

"This old lady is one of our most faithful Christians," they said. "She always comes to our meetings, though she lives three miles away. She gives cheerfully what she can to every good cause. She used to have a terrible temper, but since she believed, she has become very kindhearted and patient. Everybody knows about it."

The missionary looked at her. Seventy-three years old, and she might be gone before he would come around next year! He decided to give her another trial.

"Who is God?" "God is our heavenly Grandfather."

"Where is he?" "Wherever I go, he is there."

"Can you talk to him?" Her face brightened up with understanding, "Yes, I can."

"When do you talk to him?" "Why, very often. When I am working in the fields, when I am making bread, when I feel sad, I talk to him and my heart is broadened." Her tongue was loosed. She was now on familiar ground. "I talk to him whenever I want to. Sometimes I have only one or two thoughts and talk shorter. Whatever I have in my heart, I say."

There was much about the Christian religion that this Chinese woman did not know. She still had much to learn as far as items of knowledge went. One thing was certain, however. She had had a religious experience which had changed her life. Would you not say that what she had learned entitled her to membership in any church of Christ the world around?

To sum up: We may know, after a fashion, intellectually, but we never know in reality until the learning becomes a part of our lives, a part of our actions. We have not really learned in the richest, fullest sense until what we know enables us to act in larger, finer ways — ways that enrich our own life and the lives of those about us.

### 5. What Are the "Laws" of the Learning Process?

As we study the matter, we discover that there are certain conditions which, when met, expedite learning. When we observe these conditions in helping others to learn or in learning anything ourselves, we succeed. When we fail, either through ignorance or willfulness, to observe them, we hinder rather than help the learning process. These conditions may be stated as "laws of learning." We should remember that they are always in operation and that they are working either for or against us. We cannot break these laws; we may break ourselves against them. Moreover, these are God's laws. As we understand and use them, we are working with God in ways which he has planned.

The first law is *the law of readiness.* When a person is ready to act in a particular way, to do so is satisfying and pleasant, but to fail to act is unpleasant or annoying. A healthy boy is usually " ready " in the presence of a dish of ice cream. To eat it is satisfying; to be inhibited from eating it is quite otherwise.

The other side of this law is that if a person is not ready to act, it will be unpleasant and annoying to be compelled to act. Suppose, for instance, that our boy has had his fill of ice cream. He will come to the point where to be compelled to eat any more will be not only distasteful but actually a cruel punishment.

It will be evident at once how important the observance of this law is in the work of the church. In many of the church's approaches to adults, this first law of learning is ignored and violated.

In considering this law of readiness, as well as those that follow, we shall do well to bear in mind that there is a large degree of variation between individuals. This fact is so significant that, by some writers, " individual differences " is deemed worthy of being set forth as a separate " law of learning." Perhaps this is giving undue prominence to these differences, but we should never lose sight of the fact that the differences due to heredity and experience are exceedingly important. Indeed, the Committee on Religious Education of Adults felt called upon to introduce into Book Four of the *International Curriculum Guide,* a whole chapter dealing with the reasons why religious experiences vary. Only upon the basis of an understanding of this variable quality of religious experiences, and of the factors which enter into religious experience and cause them to vary, is it possible to plan an effective and adequate adult curriculum of Christian education.[3]

The second law of learning is *the law of exercise,* sometimes called the law of " use and disuse." This means that when once we have done anything, that same act is more easily performed again. We learn to do the things that we do. Sometimes it is

[3] That the reader may consult this important document, pp. 12, 13 of The International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, *Christian Education of Adults,* are placed in this book as Appendix IV, pp. 187–189.

said that we "learn by doing." True enough, but this law is far more specific than that. It says that we learn exactly the thing that we do and that is all that we learn. We learn obedience by practicing obedience; we learn a sense of responsibility by practicing responsibility; by being kind we learn kindness; we learn to choose wisely by responding well in situations of choice. The converse is also true. We never learn to choose wisely by having someone tell us what to do. In that case we are practicing obedience, and obedience is what we are learning. To learn to do anything, *we must do that thing.* We shall never learn to do it in any other way than by practice.

The third law is *the law of effect.* What is the effect upon the learner of the practice or the exercise?

A boy throws a ball to his younger brother to catch. The latter misses it more times than he captures it. If the law of exercise alone operated, he would never learn to catch the ball, for he is practicing wrong more than right. But what is the effect on him when he misses, and what is the effect when he does manage to catch the ball? He is happy when he succeeds and sorry when he fails. What we do with satisfaction and with success we are eager to repeat, and that we learn to do. What we do with dissatisfaction and annoyance we try to avoid as far as possible. The effect upon the learner is very important.

When a woman is elected an officer of the women's society in the church, is such help ordinarily afforded her that she is able to discharge the duties of her office with satisfaction to herself and with satisfaction to others? If this has not been done, that woman is not likely to "be caught again in that trap." And who would blame her for feeling that way? We need, in the church, to surround the experiences that people have with such satisfactions that the effect will be in the direction of desirable growth and advancement. The violation or the ignoring of the law of effect probably drives more people out of active participation in church leadership than we imagine.

The fourth law is *the law of association.* This law says that

every new experience is interpreted in terms of past experience. So the little child calls the orange, seen for the first time, " ball."

A missionary in British Guiana planned for Mother's Day a special gathering of the " mothers " of the children in the mission. She had to give up the idea in a situation where 55 per cent of the children were illegitimate, where the experience of motherhood meant so little and was associated with such a low standard of marriage relationship. In the same mission the ideal of fatherhood was so low as to make it unwise to use the concept of God as Father. The law of association operated in this particular situation so as to make it almost impossible to use a religious idea which means so much to us and is helpful to us except in very unusual cases.

The teacher or leader cannot forget for a moment that the present is interpreted in terms of past experience. In like manner, the future will be determined by present experience when that in turn will have become past experience. Because the law of association is ever in force, it is important that present learning experiences shall be surrounded in every possible way with pleasing and desirable associations.

In this connection we should emphasize the importance of what are called " incidental " or " concomitant " learnings. Some writers would say that we have here another " law of learning." We see it, however, as one aspect of this law of association.

A man hears some ephemeral preaching. By association the church comes, in his mind, to stand for something inadequate, something unworthy of the interest and concern of intelligent people.

Adult class members, while zealous for the success of the worship service, have been known to spoil its effect for others by inattention, lack of participation, or even by actual disturbances of whispering. A church may be very much in earnest about teaching the truth of the gospel but may go about it in such a way as to vitiate its own purpose. The fact is that every last

thing that the church does has its effect in the lives of its people. The reason for this is clear.

Situations that provoke responses are usually complex. While we may respond to some one element in the situation which is the focus of attention, our response is nevertheless affected and influenced by other elements at the "fringe" of attention. We really never learn anything without carrying along at the same time a number of incidental learnings; these are very important, sometimes becoming even more important than the "primary" learning. They always color and affect the learning experience.

In a contest, a certain Church School was divided into two opposing camps. (What possibilities of incidental learnings there are in such an arrangement!) Among other things, "points" were awarded to classes for the amounts of their offering. On the last Sunday of the contest feeling ran high. "Our side," which included a very enthusiastic class of Intermediate boys, was a little ahead. That day, the adult class, on "the other side," received an offering, or, shall we say in this case, took a collection, of over $25, thus putting their side "over the top." What was the effect on those boys? They said: "That was not fair and that was not Christian. Those people ought to know us kids couldn't do that." One boy was so disgusted that he left the class and it took six months to get him back.

That school was much concerned about its lesson materials. But the leaders forgot that the way Christian people co-operate is also a part of the course of learning for all who are concerned.

The fact remains that every situation that evokes a response results in learning for good or for ill. You may send your boy to Sunday School, but he learns most of his lessons from the way church people act in relationships to one another. What impression is made upon young people in a church where the adult class takes the best room in the new church after it had been promised to a group of Boy Scouts if they would raise a hundred dollars for the new building?

This law of association has far-reaching ramifications.

The fifth law is *the law of personal and social influence.*

Nothing contributes more to the learning experience than the earnest and purposeful influence of the leader. When this is coupled with the aggressive support of a social group, such as the family, and beyond that by a community influence, the results are invaluable. The effect upon the learner of the impact of this social influence is well-nigh irresistible. While it is recognized that these personal and social influences operate in relation to practically every one of the other laws of learning, they are so outstanding as to deserve mention in their own right. The significance of the community as teacher, and the importance of persons who exert purposive influence, cannot be overestimated. Out of the interaction of personalities come the most stimulating learning situations, and the most vital responses, to contribute to the stream of experience. When leaders with deliberate purpose and plan marshal social and personal influences, and direct them upon the learner with a view to creating a situation which is to evoke a response; when in addition they guide the response as it is made, utilizing the forces inherent in the social situation as agencies for reinforcement, learning in the desired direction takes place rapidly and readily.

### 6. How Then, Do People Become Effective Christians?

We grow through our experiences. We grow scientifically through experiences in scientific fields; we grow astronomically through experiences in the realm of astronomy; we grow mathematically through mathematical experiences; geographical things are geographically learned; social growth is derived from social experiences; intellectual things are intellectually discerned; and, as the Scripture affirms, spiritual things are spiritually discerned.

In answer, therefore, to the question, "How do we become effective Christian men and women?" we say, "By making Christian responses to situations faced, by *being* Christian." A dynamic, Christlike personality is the result of an increasingly rich experience in Christian living. It is not by assenting to a set of

principles, though that may be important; it is not by acceptance of a creed, though that may have its place, that strong Christians are made. They are developed through having a vital personal experience of Jesus Christ, by entering into his life and his purpose and his program, by doing deeds of Christian love and service, by striving together with others in common cause. The appreciation and acceptance of this point of view makes this thing of helping others to be Christian a far more difficult and a far more glorious undertaking than we have conceived it to be in the past. How this is so will be seen as we press on in the chapters ahead of us to other matters involved in building an effective program.

### 7. What Is the Place and Function of the Church as an Agency for Promoting Spiritual Growth?

We have already suggested that everything that the church does in which people participate has its significant contribution to make to the growth of their personalities. Under careful planning and wise guidance, growth is in the right direction, the direction of the objectives of the church. Under careless or unwise guidance, learning takes place, but the learning may be wrong rather than right. The writer has been in Adult Departments in Church Schools where the service of worship was conducted in such a way as to encourage irreverence, and that in a place where of all places persons should be learning to be reverent. The leaders may not have intended to do this, but lack of control of the situation and failure of positive and wise guidance created a situation in which the response was far from the one to be desired. Let us look well to our program and to our leadership in it, and to the situations that we are creating to which other persons are to respond.

When a church takes this matter seriously and earnestly sets itself, through its leaders, to exert the utmost influence in the direction of helping persons to grow spiritually, what does that church become?

That church is a seed plot, a fertile field in which the spiritual life may be nurtured.

That church is a fellowship of Christian men and women, boys and girls, all striving together in common cause. It is a place where opportunity is afforded for the practice of the Christian life — the learning laboratory of the " Beloved Community."

That church is an experiment station, a proving ground, where, under sympathetic and helpful supervision and guidance, learners may actually try out new ventures in Christian life and service with a view to discovering those experiences which are most productive of spiritual growth.

That church is a demonstration center of Christian living, where people may learn what it really means to live the Christian life; it is the true Christian community, set in the world but at the same time apart from it, a place where the principles of the Kingdom of God are put to the test of personal and social living.

That church is a school in Christian living, where the spiritual life is being stimulated, guided, and enriched, and where controls in personal and social Christian living are developed.

That church becomes, as far as it is a part of the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the *veritable body of Christ,* through which his Spirit operates and by means of which God's will is done here on earth as it is in heaven.

All this a church can be and will be, as church leaders measure up to the magnitude of their task.

## 8. What, Then, Do We Mean by Christian Education?

We have seen that a rich and worthy character does not spring, full formed, out of the experience of the moment. It is the result of a continuous process of development. There may be seasons of slow growth, or rapid growth, or even of retrogression. This growth is influenced by many factors. There are those involving the material things of the world in which the learner lives. There are personal factors within the learner himself. The long heritage of the past experiences of his family and the race is bound up with his original nature. Along with these factors are those of his own past experience. The experience that he has acquired,

together with his original nature, has a great deal to do with the way a person reacts to the various situations in life, and a tremendous influence for good or for ill. There are also the influences of other persons. The interrelation and the interaction of personalities, with all the personal and social forces that are set in operation, are especially significant in retarding or stimulating growth. Beyond all others is the operation of the Divine, the activity of God. His initiative is recognized as an integral part of every situation. Christian education frankly and eagerly assumes that God is working in and through every phase of the educational process. He operates in the original nature, in the realm of things, and especially in the realm of persons who recognize his presence and seek to co-operate with him.

Such a point of view is directly in line with the root meaning of the word "education." It is commonly said that our English word education comes from the Latin *edūco,* which means "to lead out." As a matter of fact, it is not so derived, but actually comes from *ēdŭco,* accented on the first syllable. This word means "to bring up physically or mentally, to rear, to train, to nurture." One need not be a Latin student to note the difference between these two verbs:

*ēdūco, ēdūcere, ēdūxi, ēductus*
*ēduco, ēducāre, ēducāvi, ēducātus*

From the first word we get eduction. From the second comes our word education. The Latin *ēdŭcātor* is the father, the tutor; the *ēdŭcātrix* is the nurse. The word is frequently used in the horticultural sense of nourishing or nursing with a view to promoting growth. Here is the root meaning of our word education. What a wealth of suggestion is here! What an accurate description of the teacher or leader who is to nourish, to train, to stimulate, to guide spiritual growth in learners young or old!

We may say, then, that, in the broad sense and from the standpoint of the learner, education is the process by which persons are helped to develop in personality, through their active relationship

to and interaction with their environment, material, human, and divine.

From the standpoint of the teacher or leader, the *dux,* education consists in marshaling those forces and factors by and through which growth may be stimulated and guided and directed, and helping them to operate while at the same time every effort is made to influence the learner, bringing him into such helpful relation with the educational situation that he enters actively into it with purpose and understanding.

When there is conscious recognition of the place and part of God in these processes, education is definitely lifted to a religious level. When there is definite recognition of God, as revealed in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the operation of the Holy Spirit, and when the purpose is the development of Christ-like persons who shall increasingly exercise Christian controls in all the situations they face, we have Christian education.

Christian education, then, includes all the processes through which persons are helped into vital personal relationship to Christ, a relationship which expresses itself in life. The Christian educator is thus co-operating with God in bringing men into such right relationship with him that his redemptive and creative energies may operate in human life. We do not redeem men, but under God we become the agencies, the channels, through which it is done.

Probably no more satisfactory statement is readily available than one which has been officially adopted by the International Council of Religious Education as a statement of the general objective of Christian education. This statement was formulated at the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928:

"Religious education in the Christian sense includes all efforts and processes which help to bring children, young people, and adults into a vital and saving experience of God revealed in Christ; to quicken the sense of God as a living reality, so that communion with him in prayer and worship becomes a natural habit and principle of life; to enable them to interpret the meaning of their

growing experience of life in the light of ultimate values; to develop a deepening fellowship with Christ which will find expression in attitudes and habits of Christlike living in common life and in all human relations; and to enlarge and deepen the understanding of the historic facts on which Christianity rests and of the rich content of Christian experience, belief, and doctrine." [4]

May we not with considerable satisfaction let this statement stand as our definition of the meaning of Christian education?

[4] The International Curriculum Guide, Book One, *Principles and Objectives of Christian Education,* pp. 7, 8. Used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

## Chapter IV

# THE NEED FOR AND NATURE OF ADULT EDUCATION

It is quite possible that some readers of this book have perused the first three chapters without being convinced that the education of adults by the church is either a possibility or a necessity. It may be well, therefore, to examine some of the reasons why leaders of adults are assuming that the church must promote adult education. In sections 1–3 of this chapter the need for adult education is indicated; sections 4–6 discuss something of the nature of the program of adult education; and sections 7, 8 suggest some problems that must be faced in developing an effective adult program, but also point out both human and divine resources which are available in every church.

### 1. Adults Are the Hope of the Future.

Commencement orators at colleges have formed the habit of telling young people that they are the hope of the future. There is no intention to deceive in this statement. No man or woman can stand before a group of college youth and register pessimism. But to be fully realistic one must recognize that the affairs of this world — school, business, church, State, and practically everything else — are in the keeping of adults. Youth can be the hope of the world only as adults allow it.

Take, for example, our high ideals for democracy. If democracy is to work, the bulk of men must be too intelligent to be governed by anybody but themselves, and they must become far more intelligent than they now give evidence of being. That intelligence must be an intelligence of mastery. The citizens of a democracy are both individually and collectively members of a huge corporate concern. The affairs of that concern are somewhat technical.

They are rapidly becoming more technical. Well has John Dewey stated it when he says:

"Democracy will be a farce unless individuals are trained to think for themselves, to judge independently, to be critical, to be able to detect subtle propaganda and the motives which inspire it. Mass production and uniform regimentation have been growing in the degree in which individual opportunity has waned. The current must be reversed. The motto must be: 'Learn to act with and for others while you learn to think and to judge for yourself.'" [1]

But, the affairs of democracy are in the hands of adults. The success or failure of democracy depends directly upon the degree of intelligence and mastery exhibited by the people in whose hands its destinies rest. This situation demands, above all else, an educated electorate. No process of childhood-youth education will suffice. Youth education is but the beginning. The education of a comparatively small number in college is utterly inadequate. No system will be ultimately effective that does not reach the adult population. Primary and secondary education are essential but will not open the way to solve the subtle and complex problems of modern democracy. These problems are beyond the adolescent mind. Consequently, public educators and other leaders are facing today, as never before, *the educational needs of the American people as a whole*. "Unless," says Alvin S. Johnson, "we can develop an adequate scheme of adult education, we shall be compelled, sooner or later, to give up the ideal of democratic control and surrender the direction of our lives to the specially trained minority." [2]

Adult education in some form thus becomes democracy's hope; democracy may stand or fall with the adult education movement.

What are the grounds for such a conviction? First, the prob-

[1] John Dewey, "Some Aspects of Modern Education." *School and Society*, October 31, 1931.

[2] Alvin S. Johnson, "Repairmen or Artisans?" *Journal of Adult Education*, June, 1930, p. 239.

lems that press upon us are problems which adults have to settle. They must be settled by the generation in whose hands rests this puzzling present. Secondly, no generation begins where another leaves off. The generations always overlap and for good or ill the elders are on top, either " sitting on the lid " as obstacles or pointing the way for themselves and for those who are coming on. Thirdly, the education of the next generation is in the hands of the present generation. Children are fed on adult ignorance and prejudice and are made largely the duplicates of their elders. The world may, as someone has said, " move forward on the feet of little children," but the hands of adults guide those feet and the world in which the steps are taken is adult-determined, adult-controlled, and adult-manipulated.

Consequently, we urge that the present situation demands a " continuing education," not confined to the short years of childhood and youth — " the preparatory years " — but going on into the farthest reaches of adult life. Only on such a foundation can we build a social order whose purpose and program is " the greatest good to the greatest number," and whose government is based on the will of a people composing a population drawn from every corner of the globe. " The realization, within recent years, that the aims of civilization have failed, has caused thoughtful people to look hopefully toward adult education as a remedy. . . . We need adult education chiefly because the modern world and our own country in particular need more civilization." [3]

## 2. The New Assurance as to the Educability of Adults.

For a long time we accepted the Proverbial opinion that we should " train up a child in the way he should go," but we also believed it impossible to " teach the old dog new tricks." No less a psychologist than William James said, about 1893, that " outside of their own business, the ideas gained by men before they are twenty-five are practically the only ideas they shall have in their lives.

[3] E. D. Martin, " The Dangers of Democracy." *Journal of Adult Education,* June, 1929, p. 257.

They cannot get anything new. Disinterested curiosity is past, the mental grooves and channels set, the power of assimilation gone. Whatever individual exceptions might be cited, these are of the sort to prove the rule." [4]

Such dicta have led us to consider the adult "a hopeless case." We have assumed that adult abilities to learn are definitely inferior to the abilities possessed by children. We have, on the basis of this assumption, placed our educational emphasis upon a "golden age of childhood," and education has become something to be "finished" in approximately sixteen years compassed by the ordinary school and college training.

We have found ourselves to be in error. Today we know that adult life is not a barren waste so far as learning possibilities are concerned. The old saying about "new tricks" is proved untrue by both observation and experience. Many illustrations of this fact will occur to the reader. The two which follow could be multiplied almost *ad infinitum*.

In the "Moonlight Schools," conducted by the American Illiteracy League among the mountain people of the South, it was found that these illiterate adults in six weeks of night school made progress in reading and writing equivalent to that made by young primary pupils in the public school in a year and a half.

In the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers, one of the first resident workers' schools in the United States established in 1921, tests made at the beginning and at the end of the two months' session showed improvement in the use of English equal to that made by school children over a period of four years.

The fact is that age has very little bearing on either the learning process itself or on the amount or the rapidity of learning. It is capacity, energy, interest, time, and application that make the great difference, not age.[5]

[4] William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 402.

[5] Between the ages of seventy and eighty-three "Commodore" Vanderbilt added about $100,000,000 to his fortune.

Kant at seventy-four wrote his *Anthropology, Metaphysics of Ethics,* and *Strife of the Faculties.*

In 1925, E. L. Thorndike, of Columbia University, with his associates and students, began to study the learning abilities of adults. At the meeting of the American Association for Adult Education held in Cleveland, in 1927, he presented the results of this research. His experiments compared persons thirty-five years old and over (the average age was forty-two), with persons twenty to twenty-four years old (average age twenty-two), in their ability to learn acts of skill and to acquire various forms of knowledge.

The study, made under the most rigid of research conditions, demonstrated among others the following facts:

In manual skills, such as learning to write with the wrong hand, there was equal improvement in quality or legibility.

Both groups learned faster than they would have learned the same things as children at the age of twelve.

After twenty-five the decrease in learning ability is very slight — only about one per cent a year until about forty-five.

Any adult age below forty-five is better than ages ten to fourteen.

Failure to learn is not inability due to age, but is due to one or more of the following causes: always has lacked ability to learn that particular thing; desire is not strong enough to bring about proper attention; ways and means adopted inadequate and would be at any age, to that thing; habits, ideas or tendencies which he is unwilling to alter interfere with the new acquisition.[6]

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Tintoretto at seventy-four painted the vast *Paradise,* a canvas 74 x 30 feet.

Verdi at seventy-four produced his masterpiece "Otello"; at eighty "Falstaff," and at eighty-five the famous "Ave Maria," "Stabat Mater," and "Te Deum."

Lamarck at seventy-eight completed his great zoological work, the *Natural History of the Invertebrates.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes at seventy-nine wrote *Over the Teacups.*

Cato at eighty began the study of Greek.

Goethe at eighty completed *Faust.*

Titian at ninety-eight painted his historic picture of the *Battle of Lepanto.*

Tennyson at eighty wrote "Crossing the Bar."

— From "Life Begins at Seventy," in *The Golden Book.*

[6] See E. L. Thorndike, *Adult Learning.*

Later investigations make it appear probable that the decline in ability to learn from forty-five on to seventy is not much more rapid than this (decline from twenty-five to forty-five), so that a man of sixty-five may expect to learn at least half as much per hour as he could at twenty-five and more than he could at eight or ten.

These researches of Thorndike have been a great factor in the spread of the idea of adult education during the last decade. It should not be long until the revelation of these facts will be found to have altered the structure of all our educational programs in America, not only for adults, but for other ages as well. Certainly, these researches had a great deal to do with the interest in and support of the new adult education movement by the Carnegie Corporation.[7]

### 3. Adults Dominate and Shape the Home Life.

When we touch the home we touch the heart, the heart of the nation and of civilization. That home life is as are the adults in that home. This is true because of the position and influence of adults in home life. It is also true because there are more adults than there are children and young people put together. Consider for a moment the statistics taken from the 1930 census reports:

[7] All this substantiates the earlier statement of Thorndike and Gates, in their *Elementary Principles of Education,* when they say:

"Indeed, the point we wish to make with great emphasis is that the facts concerning human abilities to learn and concerning the needs of society both indicate great, in fact, nearly equally great possibilities and importance for learning at every age from birth to senility. One function of education is to train human beings as early as possible to educate themselves as fully and as long as possible. As truly as education cannot begin too early, it cannot continue too long. Life should be one continuous process of learning. . . . Of first importance, then, is the fact previously mentioned, that learning ability actually increases after fourteen to a zenith in the vicinity of twenty, a maximum which persists until twenty-five or later and thereafter declines slowly. During the decade from twenty to thirty, ability to learn is at a higher average than during any other decade in life. Even from forty to fifty, capacity to learn is as high as it is at the age of fourteen or fifteen."

| | |
|---|---|
| Families in the United States | 29,880,146 |
| Children under twenty-four years | 58,479,369 |
| Adults | 64,440,230 |

These figures indicate a significant trend in our population. When the first census was taken in 1790, for every 1,000 children under sixteen years of age there were 793 adults over twenty years of age. In 1930, for every 1,000 children under sixteen there were 2,033 adults. We are increasingly becoming a nation of adults. Certainly adults dominate the situation in the home as never before, and dominate it for good or for ill.

When Plato penned his picture of an ideal republic he said that he would "send out into the country all the inhabitants of the city who were more than ten years old, and take possession of their children, who will thus be protected from the habits of their parents." He was convinced that we must either make adults safe, or remove them to a safe distance.

### 4. A Glance at Curriculum.

Having faced the need for adult education in the previous sections, let us now discuss some basic considerations in developing an adult program or an adult curriculum.

What constitutes the adult program or curriculum in the church? The church's program for adults will consist of all those activities and experiences through which individuals and groups may be helped to learn to live the Christian life and to make progress in the development of Christian personality and character. This program will embrace far more than "lessons," in the ordinary sense in which that word is used. It will include anything that contributes to spiritual growth. Here we shall find place for experiences of worship; activities of Christian service; fellowship; the discovery of new truth and the mastery of the religious heritage of the past and present; contact with others in social and recreational life; participation in efforts to bring about a more Christian social order than we now have. All these, when properly used, are open doors into the larger life. When they are

entered upon deliberately and purposefully, and when they enlist the whole personality, they become most productive means of Christian growth.

All this has special point for the church's leaders of adults. No other age group has so large a degree of self-direction and deliberate choice. No other is so largely expected to shoulder the load of responsibility in doing the work of the church in all its varied phases. Here are positive assets, for as men and women carry on the life and work of the church they are helped to grow.

The fact is that the adult is faced on every side with a bewildering array of situations to which he must make some response. As he responds he learns. He is learning from life. Experience is the adult learner's living textbook. This may be far from an academic procedure as that is ordinarily understood, but it is learning to live effectively through the experience of living. As the adult faces these situations, he must find a way out. As he seeks and finds that way, he studies and learns and applies what he already knows as a means of control in the new situation. Thus "study" and "learn" are seen to be integral aspects of effective living, in the realm of religion as in every other realm.

All that has been said above should be interpreted in the light of the fact that when we are talking about Christian education and the program of the church in developing Christian personality, we are simply looking at the human part of the process — the ways in which we co-operate with God. Christlike character does not grow or develop apart from Christ himself, who actively enters into human life through the operation of the Holy Spirit. True religious education is in no sense a substitute for the working of the Spirit of God in human life. We are religious educators when we provide the conditions under which persons may become conscious of God as a vital reality, by which they enter into active relations with him, through which they are stimulated to growth in character and life. Moreover, religious education which is genuinely Christian "seeks to develop in growing persons such an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teach-

ing of Jesus as will lead to experience of him as Saviour and Lord," [8] and a fine personal loyalty to him and his cause which is manifested in daily life and conduct.

### 5. The "Curriculum" and the "Curriculum Materials."

When we have discovered those experiences that will best stimulate religious growth and have provided ways of leading adults into situations where they may have these experiences under the direction of the church, then we shall have determined the church program, or, in other words, the curriculum of adult Christian education.

This viewpoint of curriculum differs from the older conception. That point of view saw the curriculum as an orderly arrangement of the materials which had been selected to be studied and learned. A Swedish writer expressed the general idea underlying this conception and the procedure to be followed with it as follows: "The teacher gathers the fruit from the tree of knowledge, chews it, and the greatest virtue in the pupil is to swallow easily and readily." The carry-over from such a conception is seen in the tendency of religious leaders, when asked as to their curriculum, at once to seek out a Quarterly or a textbook to show the questioner. The body of instruction materials, they think, constitutes the curriculum. But does it?

There is a difference between the "curriculum" and the "curriculum materials." While both are essential, they are not identical. The curriculum refers to the experience of the learner under guidance and enrichment. The curriculum materials are the tools which may be used by the learner and the leader as a means of stimulating and precipitating that experience, and of guiding and enriching it while it is under way. The curriculum is not the book to be read or the lesson to be studied; it is rather the experience of the learner who uses the book or studies the lesson.

[8] See Objective II, The International Curriculum Guide, Book One, *Principles and Objectives of Christian Education*, p. 11. Used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

It is not the service project described in the text, but the actual experience of the learner who performs the service or carries out the suggested activity. It is not the printed order of worship but the experience of the presence of God within the worshiper and within the group using the printed form.

The word curriculum comes from the Latin verb *curro,* which means to run. The reference is to "a race ground or course." The curriculum of Christian education is the course that we run in learning to live the Christian life. We first of all determine our objectives, which state what we want the Christian adult to be and to do. We also study our learners, to find out how they learn most readily and where they are with reference to the objectives. The curriculum is the road the learner travels, the course that he runs, in going from where he now is to the goal or goals sought.

It has been suggested that the curriculum is "guided practice in Christian living." Curriculum materials provide at least part of the guidance. We should be careful, however, to differentiate between the materials used and the experience of using these materials. Let us not fall into the error of identifying one with the other and substituting the materials for the experience itself.

Such a conception of curriculum should be readily appreciated by the church, which affirms that people become Christian through a personal experience of Jesus Christ, an experience which radically affects the life.[9]

### 6. The Need for Selection in Planning an Experience-Centered Curriculum.

The adult is literally bombarded with situations in which he makes responses of various kinds. These experiences come in the home, in the market place, on the farm, in store or office, in the club or on the golf links, on the street or highway. Every one of them has its effect, and therefore is educationally significant. Most of them are not deliberately planned. They *happen* — one finds himself in them without any purpose or choice on his part.

[9] Compare pp. 20, 21; also 43–45.

Besides the daily experiences that are *thrust upon* him, there are many which a person does choose and plan for with purpose. Here we have some control and a large degree of self-direction. We ought now to see how the church must take account of both the unplanned and the planned experiences.

Even though many of the unplanned experiences are not *religious* in content or purpose, almost any of them, under wise guidance at the right time, may be lifted to a religious level and thus be means of spiritual growth. When the church deliberately appropriates the situations in which it finds adults, then these experiences where it stimulates and guides become a part of *its curriculum* of Christian education. We well recognize the difficulties here. Many adults are pretty "well insulated" as far as the church is concerned, and even those who are reached offer a relatively small area of their lives to church direction or control. Here, therefore, the church needs to make careful and discriminating selection, utilizing only those situations where opportunity opens the way and in which there is the largest likelihood of accomplishing its purpose.

In connection with the planned experiences the church has its greatest opportunity. Here the church may not only guide the learner in his selection of the experiences which he chooses to make a part of *his curriculum* but may deliberately create situations in which responses are under its direct supervision. These experiences will constitute *the church's planned curriculum of adult Christian education.*

At no point is there greater need for careful and critical selection. Because all experiences are not of equal educational value, because of the lack of time and opportunity, because of the sweep of adult life and its inevitable immersion in the affairs of the world, the church must carefully consider what should be included in its program, and decide to include this and eliminate that on the basis of its helpfulness in promoting Christian living. Choice will also be made in the light of the effect upon the learner of the experiences he chooses.

### 7. Some Problems That Must Be Faced.

The first problem is the comparatively brief opportunity as far as time is concerned in which to attempt to stimulate or guide or direct along lines of Christian living. If a circle should be drawn to represent the 168 hours in a week, how large a segment of that circle would represent the church's part of it? Could the church's share be fairly represented by a "wedge"? A line, and in most cases a fairly thin one at that, would better indicate its share. Yet the church, in that brief time, is faced with the inescapable responsibility of providing a spiritual stimulus and eliciting a wholehearted response on the part of the learner.

Beyond this, what is done must be so far-reaching and so vital as to affect all the other hours of the week, and, to be effective, must carry over into all human relationships. The task of the school or college or university in promoting growth, in changing attitudes and actions, in helping people to know the truth, is "dead easy" as compared with that of the church.

A second complicating factor is the realization that during $\frac{166}{168}$ or $\frac{167}{168}$ of the week, in his waking hours at least, the person is subject to and immersed in an environment which is in many respects definitely hostile to Christian living and is often positively educating away from the Christian viewpoint and standard. After giving full recognition to all the influences and experiences which contribute to Christian living, the ordinary Christian often has more on the "debit" than on the "credit" side of life's ledger. All these counterinfluences the church has to recognize.

In view of these two situations a terrific burden of responsibility is put upon the church to do, in the short time at its disposal, something which will be truly significant and far-reaching.

### 8. The Church's Resources, Human and Divine.

While the church faces some complicating factors which make its work more difficult, at the same time it possesses very rich resources for accomplishing its purpose of helping adults to grow spiritually.

There is, first of all, the past experience of the adult himself, reinforced by his racial heritage. These resources, resident within the person, afford much which can be laid hold upon by the church.

Then there is available in the present experience of every learner a good deal which rightly utilized is a positive asset to spiritual growth. Christian leaders will be on the alert to discover and use these day-by-day experiences. Besides the regular run of normal situations, there are many special occasions in which religion functions with peculiar significance. The time of marriage or of the birth of a child or of family illness, the time of death or of disaster or of adversity, will afford an open door for growth under the helpful and heartening influence of the church.

We should also recognize that within the church there are two rich means of growth. In the first place, here is all the spiritual heritage and culture of the ages. Of this culture the church is at once the chief repository and the chief channel. This Christian culture, when properly used, is a mighty force. A second powerful instrument is the teacher or leader of the church activity in which the learner, together with others, is engaged. The influence of the purpose, the effort, and the example of the leader is a positive power to be reckoned with in stimulating and enriching and guiding spiritual growth.

Another resource is found in the religious materials which may be used as means of enrichment, in making spiritual experience more meaningful and as a means to control and mastery of situations faced by the learner, or by the learner and the leader together. Here may be listed the Bible, religious literature, and art in all forms that may be usable by the Christian educator.

Beyond all the resources mentioned above as peculiarly belonging to the church is the activity of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit. God is the great Initiator. He is actively seeking man and is actively involved in every situation. The Christian educator is linked with the power of the Almighty when he is aggressively and intelligently at work for the advancement of the Kingdom of God in the realm of persons. We should never for-

get that the church is more than an aggregation of human personalities; it is no mere human institution. As was affirmed in 1937 by the Oxford Conference on Faith and Life, the church is also a divine institution in which humans are caught up as a part. It is, and is meant to be, the expression on earth of the heavenly community which is dominated by the Spirit of God and is the expression of his very life. Thus may the church be what the New Testament declares it to be: the "body of Christ," expressive of his Spirit, doing his work in the world. Here is an aspect of the situation of which we have made all too little in thinking of the church and its mission, its message, and its work.

The Apostle Paul declared to his Corinthian friends, "All things are yours." [10] That statement is easily applicable to the church of today that takes stock of its resources and girds itself for the task of helping adults to grow spiritually. Besides, it may have been recognized as we have listed these resources of the church that each one mentioned is a factor that enters into any vital Christian experience. If "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" of old, we may gladly affirm that all the forces of the universe, human and divine, are allies of the church that does its work in harmony with the laws of growth, which are the laws of God. The church will draw upon not only these resources, but also all the techniques and instrumentalities and means known to it through the study of psychology and education and every other science.

Christian education, as we conceive it, is simply the intelligent marshaling of all these resources, human and divine, and linking them together into a continuous purposeful process.

[10] I Cor. 3:21.

## Chapter V

# SOME ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN A BALANCED PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

We come now to the very practical question: Out of all the possible activities which might have religious significance for adult growth, which ones shall be selected for the " planned curriculum " of the church? To put it another way, With a view to realizing all the objectives the church has in mind in the Christian education of adults, what are the most far-reaching and most typical experiences in which we shall engage adults when we are planning for their religious growth and for the development of the Christian life?

In his book *Teaching for Christian Living,* Dr. Paul H. Vieth lists thirteen different activities which may be called into use in achieving the objectives of Christian education. These activities constitute the curriculum. From the standpoint of the adult curriculum we would add at least three others to these thirteen.[1] Then, for convenience in use, we would gather these sixteen together into six general categories and suggest that our adult curriculum should provide opportunity for activities of:

a. Fellowship.
b. Worship.
c. Participation in Social and Recreational Life.
d. Discovering and Acquiring New Knowledge.
e. Service.
f. Social Action and Social Reconstruction.

[1] For Dr. Vieth's list see *Teaching for Christian Living,* pp. 174–184. We would add:

14. Specific service activities, both personal and group service, including support of the life and work of the church.
15. Social and recreational contact and association with other adults and with members of other age groups.
16. Participation in enterprises of social action and social reconstruction.

**1. Six Essential Program Elements.**

*a. Fellowship.* No one is complete by himself. A normal, rich, full Christian life cannot be lived alone. We are made to live with others. The unrelated life is abnormal, even dangerous. Rich relationships with others give quality, meaning, and significance to life. Nothing molds personality like life with a group.

The most significant fact about the church is that it is ideally a fellowship. This is its most distinctive mark; there is no other fellowship quite like it. One of our modern mystics points out that we do not have a church in the New Testament sense just because we have a list of names on a book. We do have a church in so far as we have a genuine fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ who are striving together in a common cause.[2]

It is at once apparent that by fellowship we mean far more than pleasant social relations. This fellowship that is the distinctive and unique mark of the Christian church means living with one another, loving one another, forgiving each other, suffering for and serving one another, until we become so much a part of one another that our fellowship becomes one of the most precious things in all the world and against anything that would violate that fellowship we set ourselves like flint.

That fellowship began in the group of twelve men whom Jesus invited to unite their lives with his in common cause. It was the means of transforming the lives of those men so that eleven of them went out, under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit, and changed the world.

It was in that fellowship that our Christian fellowship finds its roots, and from which it has sprung.

In these days, a new emphasis is being laid upon the meaning of the Christian Community, which is the church. The most transforming experience possible is to be a part of that Community.

[2] Emily Herman, in *Creative Prayer*. Harper & Brothers, 1925.

Paul called this fellowship "a colony of heaven."[3] Its purpose is to demonstrate the life of heaven in an environment which holds many hostile forces.

To live in such a group is a tremendous stimulus to anyone. Through the life of the group and its fellowship, the purpose and will of the individual is motivated in the direction of living at his highest and best, and that best is constantly being tested by the life of Jesus himself. Everything in this fellowship is an inspiration to growth: its purpose is service, not exploitation — it is to help people rather than to use them; its goal is development of every member to the full; it imparts vision, points the direction in which life should be moving, sets the standard as the creation of the family of God on earth.

Not only does life in such a group as this make for spiritual development; it contributes the most wholesome and hearty enjoyment as well. This is comradeship of the widest sort. Beyond the immediate fellowship of one's own group, it extends to other groups of Christians, including those of other races and cultures. Thus, sympathies and appreciations are broadened and deepened as the Christian shares in the purposes of Christ for all mankind, seeing even those outside the fellowship as its potential participants.

This fellowship of Christian believers goes beyond human relationships. It includes fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. It is in the light of this divine fellowship that we have Christian brotherhood in its purest and truest expression. In such fellowship as that one finds it easy to enter with joy into relationship with God himself and with all his children of every period of time and of every race. This is one of the most unique and significant experiences which characterizes the Christian's life. It is the central experience, as those who are united in the fellowship find themselves drawn toward a common center in their experience of God in Christ. It is because of this glorious fact that we can and do speak of the church as "the body of Christ," the organism through

[3] Phil. 3:20 (Moffatt's Translation).

which he lives and expresses his will and purpose in the life of today.

The warmth of true and genuine Christian fellowship is not only significant to those who share it, but it stands out as the one thing above all others that appeals to those outside the church and outside the Christian life and wins them. Where Christian fellowship runs deep and true, people are drawn to find in the church that experience which will complete life and make it rich and full. After testing this thing out in group after group, it seems clear that the greatest influence to lead children, young people, or adults into the Christian life and into the church is vital contact and fellowship with Christian people. Well does a recent writer say that "the church, as conceived and set forth in the New Testament, is the most perfect educational instrument that has ever emerged in the experience of the race and still stands as the most potential educational instrument in the world." [4] It is all this because of the transforming power of vital experiences of Christian fellowship, without which no life is completely Christian.

*b. Worship* — which includes public worship, family and other group worship, and the practice of the personal devotional life. Worship is a most important means of developing a sense of personal relationship and fellowship with God. Experiences which come through worship help to make God real and to interpret his purpose and plan for our lives. It is a way of clarifying the commanding ideals of Christian living and of motivating and directing conduct. If we conceive the purpose of the church to be to help people to think and feel and act like Christians, there is no more effective way of accomplishing this purpose than through vital worship experience.

A recent manual on *Personal Religious Living* [5] indicates several types of worship:

[4] J. M. MacInnis, *The Church as Teacher,* p. 71. Used by permission of The Westminster Press.

[5] Educational Bulletin 404. (See Bibliography.)

The first is personal or individual worship or devotional practice, in which, through daily meditation, prayer, and reading the Bible and devotional literature, one enters into fellowship with God.

The second is family worship, in which the home group engages in devotions together, young and old sharing in a common quest for God and in the assurance of his presence and power.

A third type is that illustrated by the small and intimate "fellowship group" in which earnest seekers after God come together to share their experiences in quite informal ways, to discover the implications of Christianity for daily living, and to engage in the fellowship of prayer and devotion.

A fourth type is larger group worship, in the Church School department or class, in the women's society or men's fellowship.

A fifth type is large group worship. We at once think of the church at worship, of so-called corporate worship, in which all class, position, race, or other distinction is forgotten in the common quest for God. Such group worship is necessary in addition to individual and small group worship "because it lifts the worshipers unitedly into a spiritual atmosphere where they see life in its relationship to the eternal God and to each other. Such worship kindles courage, confirms convictions, tempers life, creates a zest for truth, and develops a group consciousness whereby members are bound together in a fellowship which makes possible united action in the Christian enterprise." [6] It is in worship that "the individual will meets and recognizes the Universal Will and seeks to become identified with it."

Above everything else the church is and should be a worshiping group. This is its unique and distinctive function. Moreover, things are accomplished through worship which do not happen at any other point of experience. In addition, through worship all experience is illumined, made more vivid, more meaningful, more vital and dynamic. This element in the program gives Christian

[6] Report of Lake Geneva Conference, 1936, p. 120. Used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

education its peculiar and indispensable place in the total educational experience. Worship, furthermore, is central in the whole program of Christian education because it, " as an organizing experience, is that contact with the Eternal which brings all the elements of human life into meaning and proportion." [7] Consequently it must be provided for in the curriculum of the church and in the individual Christian's life if we are to have strong and virile manhood and womanhood.

*c. Participation in social and recreational life.* A good deal has been said about the values of social and recreational life for young people and children. All that has been said may be said again, and with even more emphasis, of adults. The fact is that their needs are greater because of the large degree of absorption in the task of making a living and in business and professional life. There is neither time nor opportunity, and in some cases not the disposition, to enter wholeheartedly into social and recreational activities. But the need is there just the same, and because of the nature of the world in which adults live it is greater than at any other period of life.

Men and women need relief from the tensions and strains of living. Their optimism needs to be increased. They need hearty laughs, wholesome fun, diverting recreations, to lighten the load of cares and responsibilities borne by people in the thick of the struggle. The robust health, physical strength, and mental relaxation which come from the proper kind of recreation and play are the right of adults.

Religion and happy wholesome living are not separate. They are parts of a well-balanced life. Wholesome recreation develops comradeship and understanding and moral discrimination and promotes growth in Christian character. Right attitudes toward others and toward the church are cultivated. Definite spiritual growth results from constructive and stimulating social contacts.

Yet the church has not usually planned a well-directed, purposeful social and recreational program for men and women. One

[7] T. G. Soares, *Religious Education,* p. 302.

result has been that adults have very largely found their satisfactions outside the church, and frequently in types of activity at which the church looks a bit askance. Then they have sometimes been condemned for doing the thing that the church has largely forced them to do because of its neglect. Only in 1931 did a book come from the pen of a denominational adult director which gives suggestions for planning a " church-centered purposeful social program for adults." [8]

One can hardly lay too much emphasis upon the desirability of *all church* enterprises embracing all age groups in common experiences. Social life and recreation afford an outstanding opportunity for such intergroup activity. The old-time Sunday School picnic has been discarded in many churches. Here was one time in the year when the oldsters of both sexes forgot their years and their dignity as they played kitten ball and entered into three-legged races and sack races and the ball game between the " fats and the leans." That Sunday School picnic did more to develop a community of understanding and appreciation and to create a genuine spirit of comradeship and fellowship than would a month of Sunday School lessons or a bushel of sermons. It changed the atmosphere of the whole church for weeks. Youngsters and oldsters were different, more appreciative of each other, more tolerant, more understanding.

Of course, the picnic is not the only way. The book, *Thirteen Party Plans for Adults,* by M. I. Webber, includes a program called " A Friendly Family Frolic," which has as its purpose the development of family fellowship through the church. Every family in the church — children, young people, parents, and as many times grandparents as there be — should participate in such a social time, and do so more often than any of them do.

Adults need the release that can come through interesting and engaging play in which they can lose themselves. A large and enticing field of opportunity is open to the church which will guide

[8] M. I. Webber, *Thirteen Party Plans for Adults.* Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1931.

adults in creative use of leisure.[9] Especially challenging is this field of social and recreational life as a means to more abundant living.

*d. Discovering and acquiring new knowledge.* When Jesus quoted what he said was the first and greatest Commandment, he asserted that a man was to love the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and strength *and mind*.[10] Part of a Christian's duty is to love and serve God with his intellect. Upon every follower of Christ is laid the moral obligation of being intelligent in the field of religion.

This religious knowledge should be a dynamic and growing body of knowledge. The spiritual leadership of the world is in the hands of the church in the accomplishment of the purpose of God among men. But the church cannot fulfill that purpose unless it knows what it is. Nor can the church know it until all the members, each according to his capacity, are seeking to learn and to interpret that purpose, and " are being encouraged to learn it, and given suitable and carefully thought-out opportunities of learning it." [11]

The true function of knowledge is that it may help the learner to meet and to deal effectively with the situations he is called upon to face. This *knowledge that functions* must be the possession of every Christian. In a day of tremendous advance in general education a corresponding advance in Christian educa-

[9] See H. A. Overstreet, *A Guide to Civilized Leisure.* W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1934.

United Christian Adult Movement, Report of the Lake Geneva Conference, 1936, pp. 84–92.

Leisure League Hobby Series, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City. Twenty-six little books at 25 cents each. Extensive bibliography in Vol. I, *Care and Feeding of Hobby Horses,* by E. E. Calkins.

*Handy,* Vols. I and II, compiled by Lynn Rohrbough. Recreational Cooperative Association, Delaware, Ohio, 1931.

[10] Luke 10:27.

[11] Woodard, Alfred L., Bishop of Manchester, *et al., The Teaching Church,* p. 12. Used by permission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London.

tion is indicated. Knowledge has increased in every area of life. Much of it impinges upon, and at some points even seems to conflict with, traditional Christian belief. Moreover, as the complexity of life increases, adequate functioning knowledge is needed to enable adults to cope with the present situation. The sheer ignorance of earnest Christian people relative to the vital essentials of the Christian faith and Christian truth is appalling. One result is seen in the inroads made upon the church by all sorts of cults. People are led out of the church because of its failure to provide knowledge and experience in some particular field, and also because they have not sufficient understanding to discern the true nature of that which is drawing them away. Not only must clergymen and other religious leaders be intelligent and well-informed in religious matters, but the laity as well: " Alertness of mind is a necessary part of moral goodness. . . . We lose sight of the fact that we are more likely to believe what is true if we know *why* it is true, and more inclined to do what is right if we see why it is right." [12]

It is a comparatively simple matter to list the needs of a group of Primary children and map out procedures to help them into such knowledge as will afford some degree of mastery in the religious situations they have to face. It is quite another matter to discover the needs of adults and plan a range of study and other opportunities to lead to needed knowledge which will function in all the varied situations in which they must live their Christian lives. If they are to know what to believe and how to think, if they are to understand the meaning of facts and how to interpret them, if they are to make ethical decisions in the light of adequate knowledge, then the church must do more for adults than it has as yet done, both in increasing the scope and range of the grasp of religious truth and in the provision of opportunities for securing it.

A basis for such an inclusive and comprehensive program for the discovery of religious knowledge is laid in *Learning for Life,* the new " Guided Study Program for Adults in the Church." This

[12] *Ibid.,* p. 20.

plan has been co-operatively developed through the Committee on the Religious Education of Adults of the International Council.[13] It has, since 1935, been adopted by most of the denominations represented on this committee. Some have made special adaptations of the plan. A number have issued supplementary listings of available texts for use with it.

The ordinary adult Bible class using Uniform Lessons, which cover approximately the same sections of the Bible every five or six years, does not afford opportunity for men and women to cover that wide range of Christian truth which is needed for Christian living in such a day as this. True enough, this popular series provides a *Bible curriculum* covering a part of the Scriptures, mostly the narrative portions. "Learning for Life," on the other hand, affords a *life curriculum,* which covers all areas of religious knowledge, including the Bible, and opens the way for Christians who aspire "unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."[14]

The plan classifies religious knowledge in the following seven areas:

The Bible in Life.
Personal Faith and Experience.
Christian Family Life.
Church Life and Outreach.
Community Issues.
Basic Social Problems.
World Relations.

Then, because of the place and responsibility of adults for carrying the load in church leadership, Leadership Education is recognized as a specialized area, basic to all the work of the church. It is not described in detail in Bulletin 410, but is presented in its complete form in the International Council Leadership Bulletins 501 and 502.[15]

In each of these seven groups a number of "units" of knowl-

[13] *Learning for Life,* Educational Bulletin 410 (see Bibliography), describes the plan and carries suggestions for its administration and offers an interdenominational listing of texts.

[14] Eph. 4:13.

[15] See Bibliography, p. 209.

edge are described. In connection with each unit there are several texts, from which selection may be made according to the desire of the group concerned. The plan may be followed by a single class, by all the classes in an Adult Department of a Church School, or by the whole Adult Section of the church. The group will project its study program on the basis of cycles of twelve units. Each unit is a quarter of work or its equivalent. There are some double units requiring at least twenty-four sessions, some half units of six sessions, and some denominations have adopted one-third units in their modification of the plan.

To give variety it is suggested that in each cycle of twelve units, one course shall be taken in each of the seven groups. To afford specialization, it is urged that while the other courses may be taken as desired, at least four shall be taken from some one of the seven groups.

A Sunday Church School class, meeting once a week, would be able to cover a cycle in three years, four quarters a year. If, however, there was an additional opportunity for " Learning for Life " courses in the midweek service or on church night or in an adult school of religion, several more units could be secured within the year. Additional provision might be afforded in the men's organization or the women's society. Current mission study courses, for instance, are counted as half units, as most of them provide for six sessions of group work.

This new plan is meeting with wide acceptance. Some churches are making it the basis for their whole adult study curriculum. As was noted previously, the plan has been commented upon most favorably in the study made by the American Association for Adult Education.[16] It fits in with the new demand for short-term interest courses, which make it possible for the group to vary its study diet and base its program on the interest and needs of its members.

Use of this program opens a wider door of opportunity for the

[16] See page 13. Also see B. E. Meland, *The Church and Adult Education,* pp. 24–27, 100, 106.

church's adult constituency for two reasons: First, countless adults who would never "join a Sunday School class" are glad to avail themselves of a special course which intrigues both from the standpoint of inherent interest in the subject and also because it is over in a comparatively short time — six weeks or three months. They can quit gracefully at the end. Secondly, every new course is a new occasion to confront the whole adult church constituency with its claims. Those not interested in an Old Testament survey may be gripped by a three months' discussion of the application of the principles of Jesus to our modern life.

Not only does "Learning for Life" enlist many adults who would be unreached by the average Church School classes, but it also helps to solve the difficult problem of the leadership of class groups. People may be used at the point of their interest and ability, their preparation and inclination. We can build up a "faculty" of leaders who teach for short blocks of time. Many a man and woman will be found in even the average church community who would never consent to "take a Sunday School class," but who would, on the contrary, be honored and challenged by the idea of offering a three months' course, or a six weeks' course, in the field of his or her interest and concern. One could be sure of "being out of it" at the end of the period. This is quite a different situation from that of the ordinary teacher, who feels when he faces the church teaching situation that he is up against "a life sentence."

New knowledge may come through reading; study; investigation; discussion; listening to sermons, addresses, and reports; personal conferences; discriminating listening to the radio. All these means need to be correlated, each one properly evaluated and utilized. All areas of religious life and knowledge should be comprehended in the program.

Let every church make adequate provision for religious knowledge to be available to and appropriated by all the adults for whose growth that church is responsible!

*e. Service* — which includes sharing in the life and work of the

church, and in its missionary and other projects expressive of Christian love and good will, both through personal effort and the giving of substance. Nothing stimulates Christian life and growth more than doing deeds of Christian love and service. The followers of the One who came " not to be ministered unto, but to minister " have always come closest to their Leader when they have given themselves in deeds of mercy. As they have done things for others, they have entered into an experience which has profoundly affected their own growth and development. As people have shared Christ's purpose in self-sacrificing service in his name, with no thought but that of outreaching love, their lives have become more Christlike.

We do well to distinguish two types of Christian service: The first consists of those services which, when rendered, make possible the life and work and functioning of the church. This is " inside service," carrying the benefits to the class or group or the church itself. These are ways of sharing the common life and making it more significant because of specific contributions. Here would be included such things as helping in various phases of the church program, acting as church officer or other leader, carrying specific responsibility such as caring for and arranging supplies and equipment. This does more than make the group life pleasant and profitable for all and affords experience in living as a part of the group. If entered upon unselfishly and sacrificially, it brings vast returns in real joy. One is close enough to the situation to see the direct results of self-investment. There is no more abiding satisfaction than the consciousness that one is contributing to the fellowship in significant ways. No one achieves his greatest growth unless he pours out his life into the lives of other persons. In such service he identifies himself with the church and above all else with Christ. Until adults come to the point where they grasp opportunities for doing this sort of thing, they are missing one of the important ways of growing into maturity from a Christian standpoint. Yet these are the things that one would be " expected to do " in the natural course of events. In a very real sense

the returns accrue to the doer and enrich his life, for he is a part of the benefited group.

A second kind of service is that in which those outside the group concerned reap the benefits. This is " outside service." After all, a man is expected to provide for his own family as a good husband or father. He deserves little credit for his deeds and grows little in attitudes of outreaching good will if he does no more than that. " Charity begins at home," but if it stays at home it ceases to be charity. The most significant growth comes in broadened sympathies and enlarged vision and deepened insight when one goes beyond his own group to other families, other communities, other nations and races, in the practice of Christian brotherliness. The truest expression of the Christian's life and love is that outreach toward those who " have no right " to expect anything from him, except that they are in need and he is a Christian. The " cup of cold water " given unto " one of these least " in Christ's name and spirit, whether the recipient be in one's own community or on the other side of the world, does something to the giver that cannot be measured. The more direct and personal it is the better, yet there are multitudes of rich services which must in the nature of the case be rendered indirectly. Here we think of our sharing in the missionary enterprises around the world and in our own nation. Here would be included special opportunities for the relief of suffering, helping famine sufferers in China, relief of the poor and hungry, support of the aged in an old people's home.

A special phase of both " inside " and " outside " service is the furnishing of financial support. The giving of money is a vital part of personal service — perhaps one of the most personal things we can do if the giving is done intelligently and for specific causes. In a very real sense our money is coined personality. Unfortunately there is much giving that is far from Christian in its motivation and in its method, and in its results upon the giver. Plans for raising money for worthy causes need to be scrutinized with the view to evaluating their effects upon the givers as well as upon those who receive. Adults especially are in danger of

giving less consideration to this matter than are young people, who do not ordinarily have much money at their command. Intelligent and purposive and proportionate giving is a means of growth, and should be a vital part of Christian experience.

If adults are to get the most possible out of their service activities, they should be entered upon in a regular and systematic way, not merely spasmodically and depending upon passing emotions. A definite program of service activities is needed, and it should be planned in advance and administered in such a way as to contribute as largely as possible to the various interests and needs of adults and increase their knowledge and sense of sharing. The causes served must be understood and the results of service rendered made known so as to create as great satisfaction as possible in the undertaking. There should also be a large degree of choice in projects or objects of service and the motive for service should be thoroughly Christian. Only so can we carry out in practice the words and the spirit of the Master who, after stating the first and greatest Commandment as love for God with heart, soul, and mind, said, "And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." [17]

*f. Social action and social reconstruction.*[18] We have already discussed service as an essential element in a well-rounded program of adult Christian education. This would include all types of service activities, including, of course, social service. This is the ministry of the church in the relief of human suffering and misery, of whatever sort and from whatever cause. While much less of this sort of service is rendered directly by the church as an institution than formerly, yet the church has a large stake in these enterprises, even though they are largely carried on by private and by Government agencies. Social service had its original motivation in the Christian group and still depends upon Christians for support of various kinds.

[17] Matt. 22:39.

[18] The reader should consult *Christian Action on Social Problems.* (See Bibliography.)

It is one thing to render social service which seeks to ameliorate the results of social maladjustments. It is quite another thing to grapple with the causes of these maladjustments with a view to preventing them. No doubt both things need to be done, but the church is definitely shifting its emphasis from social service to social action.

What do we mean by social action? "Christian social action is the efforts of Christians to change the social and economic order in such a way that it will better serve human needs and so not roll up such a vast burden of human misery and misfortune to be carried as a public responsibility. It aims to get at the roots of the difficulty. Social service deals with the effects of an imperfect or failing social and economic order. Social action aims at the causes. Social service provides ambulances and hospitals to care for the human wreckage at the foot of our economic precipice. Social action asks why a precipice lies athwart the pathway of so many millions of human beings and seeks to bridge the chasm with economic opportunity and social security." [19]

When the Spirit of Christ becomes dominant in the life of a follower of his, that person is discontented with anything in himself or in the social order which is contrary to Christ's purpose for all men. One cannot be concerned about developing Christian persons without at the same time making every effort to create the kind of social conditions under which a Christian can live his life with some expectation of success. We do not have here two gospels, a personal gospel and a social gospel. We have one gospel, which is the whole gospel and comprehends the individual and society at the same time.

There are things wrong with this world. If these wrongs are to be righted, it must be done by those who are responsible for the wrongs and in whose hands the power of making them right rests. For whatever is wrong adults are responsible. If we are "in a mess" politically or socially or economically, we cannot lay the

[19] *Christian Action on Social Problems,* p. 9. Used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

responsibility at the door of children or even of young people. Adults are to blame. The affairs of this world are, for good or for ill, in adult hands. If they are to be changed for the better, adults must find the way and lead forward aggressively.

The adult Christian lives in a community and in a world. Part of the field of his operation will be the application of the principles of Jesus to the social order, with a view to bringing it into closer harmony with the ideals of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. These ideals must be translated into definite and concrete ways of living in and building up a Christian social order. This is accomplished in two ways:

First, when a person's life is changed in the direction of more Christlike living the social group in which that person lives is also changed because he is a part of it. The Christian adult will take his place and exert his influence as an individual and as a member of the various groups of which he is a part.

Secondly, the church itself will do something about social conditions. It cannot stay out of social education and action, for Christianity is action. It is the function of the church to help people to be Christian in the situations in which their Christian life must be lived. People live in homes. If those homes are to be made Christian, it must be done by adults, and the church should show them how.

People live in communities; they engage in business and professional life and in citizenship activities. They have a right to look to the church for help on how to be Christian in these important relationships. If the adult is to take his place like a Christian and exert a positive Christian influence in the groups in which he is functioning, the church must do its part in education, in health and hygiene, in economic, industrial, and vocational adjustments, in movements for civic and political righteousness, in crime control, in temperance and moral welfare, in care of dependents and defectives, and so forth.

This does not mean necessarily that the whole church as an institution will function in these areas. It may or may not. It

does mean, however, that the church will support its members as they function, whether they work as individuals or in small groups. Above all else, the church is responsible for providing opportunities of clarifying the issues involved, for throwing light on possible solutions and ways of acting, for pointing out the human and the Christian implications of these situations, for bringing out into the open the facts on all sides of controversial matters that decisions may be made intelligently.

Of one thing we may be sure: As persons and groups seek and find Christian ways of action and enter aggressively into enterprises of social reconstruction, not only are conditions changed, but the people involved are changed as well. They grow and develop in personality and character. In the very processes of facing, grappling with, and solving these crucial problems there will come increase of knowledge and of power which will open the way for effective advances for the Kingdom of Christ and for more abundant living for the participants.

In the Lake Geneva Conferences on the United Christian Adult Movement in 1936, 1937, and 1939, various groups faced vital issues in social education and action. Many of these were controversial issues. It was discovered that in the experience of taking hold of these problems, on which there was often the widest degree of difference of opinion, the groups had most thrilling experiences of growth. The same thing has happened in schools of Christian living, where groups have sought effective ways of Christian action in family, church, community, and world relations.[20] If growth is what we seek, here is one of the most fruitful possible ways of stimulating it.

### 2. To Sum It All Up.

We may say, then, that the task of the church is twofold: to lead people into situations in which, as they respond, they may have vital religious experiences; to see to it that, as far as possible, each person

[20] Compare Educational Bulletin 412, *Schools in Christian Living*. (See Bibliography.)

is actually enlisted in such a variety of activities as will insure well-rounded spiritual development.

One reason for so many immature Christians, and for such lopsided Christians, is that people tend to elect to participate in perhaps only one activity, such as public worship, and neglect to engage in others which are needed if they are to grow to any degree of maturity and into a balanced life from a religious standpoint. As we shall see later, if adults are to be induced to share gladly in all the necessary elements of a well-rounded program, we may need to revamp our church program considerably. But of this we may be sure: All must engage in worship, and service activities, and must have experiences of deep Christian fellowship, of social and recreational life, of new knowledge, of social action, if they are to experience a full and abundant Christian life.

Moreover, these types of experience are to be related to each other. One should not be overdone to the detriment of the other. There needs to be balance and emphasis in accordance with the spiritual need of the learners.

To accomplish this our whole program must be carefully evaluated and tested at every point, and must be in a constant process of being improved and made more effective.[21]

[21] Guides for the evaluation and improvement of the adult program are provided in the appendixes of Educational Bulletin 402, *Adults in Action.* (See Bibliography.)

## Chapter VI

# PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING THE ADULT PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH

### 1. Helping Adults Where They Have Needs.

On the basis of the results which we want to accomplish, and of the spiritual needs of those whom we want to influence, the church will marshal the means at its disposal to achieve its purposes in the lives of adults. Starting with the learners, wherever they happen to be, the church will plan a program designed to result in a rich and full Christian experience. This program will consist of activities in which adults may participate, together with various curriculum materials to stimulate and enrich and guide the experience to make it most meaningful. It is one thing to plan such a program *for* adults, but how are we going to *enlist these adults* and get them to participate in it?

Adults are independent. They will participate only in those activities in which they are interested and want to share. Children are more or less dependent upon the will of others. They can be kept in the church and its various programs by the interest and concern and pressure of their elders. Even in those cases where the parents are not zealous for the church, the efforts of teachers and leaders are fairly successful in holding the youngsters. At adolescence we begin to sense a leak, and many a church says, "We have no young people of the eighteen to twenty-three group; they have all moved away." One wonders where all those young people have moved to. They certainly have not vanished into thin air! Have they, perchance, all gone to some town where there are no churches? This is hardly possible. The fact is that, wherever they are, as they come to the time of life when they are "on their own," far too many are passing up the church and are outside its influence and activities. Then these young people be-

come young adults and we have what has been called the "lost generation," the finest life of our communities, the group that is in a position to render the largest service when a great idea grips them or when a worthy cause beckons, and they are largely outside the church.

In one church, with unusual equipment and an adequate staff, the leaders of adult church activities were studying their situation. In answer to the question, "What figure would, in round numbers, represent the men and women in this community for whose spiritual growth and development this church is responsible?" the answer was, after a good deal of discussion, "Approximately 1,000." The group had previously listed the adult organizations, agencies, and activities in the church in which adults were urged to participate. They now faced the question: "How many of these 1,000 adults are *now* actively participating in even one of these activities, excepting for the moment the church service of worship?" The considered answer, after a good deal of debate, was, "Two hundred and twenty-five." Then came the query, "If we now let the church service into the picture, how much will we 'boost' this figure?" The group first put it up to 300, but quickly dropped it to 275. These leaders declared that of 1,000 adults for whom the church was responsible, only 275 were actually engaged in spiritual activities through which they might grow. No participation means no growth; some participation means some growth; wholehearted participation means significant growth.

The reader may think that this is an extreme illustration. Perhaps things are better in your church. The writer has found, to his regret, that in a great many churches, investigated carefully, *the majority of the adult church constituency is not actively sharing in the present ongoing program.* When we compare *adult population* with adult church participation, the situation is nothing less than alarming.

The fact is that the church is not now so successfully enlisting adults in its program as it ought to be. To put it another way, adults are not now finding the church a necessity as an aid to

living their lives and achieving their purposes. Maybe their purposes are wrong at some points. But, may it not also be true that the church has failed to develop a program which relates itself vitally to adult interests and adult needs? How far, for instance, has the church been a real service station from which help may flow in meeting the multitudinous and perplexing problems of home and family life? No agency is in quite so strategic a position as is the church to function in this field. Such service, if actually available, would not only be appreciated but would be sought. Yet few homemakers, even though they be Christian people, would think first of their church as a source for wise counseling and helpful guidance in meeting family problems and in solving marital difficulties.

Whether we like it or not, it is the failure of the church in meeting vital needs that has led to the serious situation which we face today. Because the church has not functioned as it should, millions of adults are simply paying no attention to it and are either hiding their heart hunger as best they can, or are trying to slake their thirst at other wells, which they frequently find to hold bitter water rather than sweet. It may seem a harsh thing to say, but we believe it to be a fact that *for many of their most vital needs — and many of these are spiritual needs — people do not think of the church as a possible source of light and of life.* Such a situation is intolerable! We must change it, and we can change it if we are willing to pay the price.

## 2. Enlisting Adults in the Program.

This book is based upon the premise that if a church really develops a program on the basis of vital needs of men and women, that church will actually be sought out by its constituency.

One ground for this conviction is the experience of churches that are actually doing what we are suggesting. Space does not permit us to report here in detail upon what is being done so successfully in a good many places.[1] Among typical projects are

[1] *The Church and Adult Education,* the survey by B. E. Meland, reports, especially in Part II, a great many very successful ventures. See also *It Has*

forums, institutes, seminars, church night interest groups, university or college of life, adult schools of religion, schools in Christian living, " Learning for Life " schools, et cetera. In many of these enterprises some attempt is made through the use of " interest finders," or similar techniques, to secure the actual cooperation of the adult church constituency in determining the nature and direction of the undertaking.[2]

Adults have crucial needs, needs the church could meet if only they would give it a chance. On the other hand, the church must demonstrate that it is not only interested in meeting those needs but ready and able to do so. If adults are to be led to look to the church for help, there are some things that the church will have to do.

First of all, the church will have to lay hold on the real issues of life. Adults live where issues are being met and fought out and decided. This is life's *growing edge*. The church, by and large, seeks to escape anything which is controversial, has tried to keep things " on an even keel," has sought to avoid " rocking the boat." Yet adults live, thrive, and grow amidst life's tensions. While one function of the church may be to provide a relief, for a time at least, from these pressures, yet it need never hesitate to help adults to face issues squarely and fearlessly, in full confidence that life is made up of this sort of thing. Of one thing we are sure, if the church seeks to evade issues, the largest opportunity for growth is irretrievably lost. Well may the church make its greatest contribution at the point of deepest need and of greatest service.

Secondly, we must start with what adults want to know if we are to help them to learn what they ought to know. There are many things that may be desperately needed which are not in the consciousness as needs. One of the greatest problems in education is that of helping people to be interested in what they ought to know when there are so many things they want to know that

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*Been Done,* Educational Bulletin 411 of the International Council reporting cases of successful adult work.

[2] For such a check-list interest finder see *Learning for Life,* Educational Bulletin 410. (See Bibliography.)

these unconscious needs are either lost sight of or pushed into the background. There are so many things we are interested in that we may spend our time pursuing these and leave out some of the most vital and basic and important matters. Here, of course, the wise and able teacher will seek to find ways to lift the unconscious needs up to the level of conscious interest.

The teacher of a group of young women thought her group needed a study of the life of Christ. The group was not interested in such a study, but was interested in the consideration of "How Personality Is Made." The teacher was disturbed, but was encouraged to start with her group at the point of their apparent interest. As they worked along, it was increasingly brought out that the principles of personality development were understood and used by Jesus in his dealing with people. Again and again the teacher found her best illustrations from the Gospels. She did this more or less unconsciously at first, and then deliberately. It was not long before the members of the group were saying, "If Jesus was so successful in dealing with people because he knew how to touch the springs of life, maybe we would do well to study Jesus and find out from him how personality is made." Soon they were actually studying the life of Christ, and doing it because there was something there which they were eager to discover. A dormant interest had been aroused and lifted to the level of consciousness and had become dominant.

Thirdly, the church must expect to provide variety in its program. Not only are adult needs many and varied, but adults are not all at the same stage of development. The tendency in many churches is to assume that adults are on a uniform spiritual level. We try to feed them all on the same spiritual diet, and even out of the same spoon. If they don't like what we offer, they are likely to get nothing else. For instance, the only opportunity for study and discussion in many churches is the adult Sunday School class, which reaches only 9 per cent of the adults of the country. Why do we not reach the other 91 per cent? One answer, at least, is that we are not really planning to provide for

the spiritual needs of that large number who are not intrigued by what goes on in the average adult class. And because the class does not get them and the church offers nothing else, they seek elsewhere or lose something out of their lives which they desperately need.

Someday the church will realize that as a good spiritual dietitian it must take individual and group differences and needs into account and plan its program with these differences in view.

A young man, the new professor of physics in a college, came into a certain church and offered himself to it as a candidate for larger spiritual growth. He was advised to go into the men's class of the Sunday School. The very first Sunday the discussion brought up a question which was certainly " down his alley " — a question of scientific fact which seemed, on the surface at least, to upset some of the generally held religious ideas. There were differences of opinion in the group. At last the young scientist was led to express himself, which he did with some degree of conviction, stating that religion and science were not in conflict and that when we have really found the truth through science, it is the truth of God, whether it seems to overturn some previously held conceptions or not. A member of the group said, " This is heretical." A number of the men, he said, " looked at me as though I had no right to an opinion which did not agree with theirs. I certainly could not get much help from that class." The result was that he did not go again and because there was not a group in the church in which there was a place for a mind that insisted on subjecting truth to all the tests, he dropped out altogether.

What that church needed, as the pastor stated to the writer, was a " club breakfast plan of discussion groups, where those who wanted toast and coffee could have that and those who were able to assimilate steak and potatoes and all the accompanying trimmings could have that." There may be a place and need of a group for people whose minds are all made up as far as religion and everything else is concerned. Perhaps it is even right that they

should not be too much disturbed in their thinking about the things of religion. But there is also a place, or should be, where the inquiring mind, open and seeking for truth, may have the experience of searching and testing and evaluating truth in a congenial fellowship.

Spiritual experience is not all one dead level. All the data are not yet in. There are still reaches of spiritual experience for the adventurous soul. And may it not be that the greater discoveries will be made by those who are willing to venture and eager to do so.

Fourthly, the church must "grow up" in its thinking and in its expectation. For too long we have carried on our program as though, while children and youth are in the process of development, when we come to the adult we are dealing with a grown *person* rather than a *growing person.* Adult education points out that adults are still growing; that this growth goes on as long as life lasts and that it is the function of the church to *promote growth* at every point — not to *confirm growth* at some point. For the adult educator who is really on the job:

> "Every day is a fresh beginning,
> Every morn is the world made new."

So we go forward reminding ourselves that adults live where the issues of life are being faced and decided; that we must start with felt needs; that our program must take account of individual differences and the varied needs of those who are at different stages of spiritual development; that adults are not grown people but growing people.

This point of view will of course suggest that the church program for adults will of necessity be far more varied and much more complex than that in other age groups. This is inevitable if the program is designed in any measure to meet needs and interests.

This should not discourage us, however. On the contrary, the very fact that adults have such a bewildering array of vital needs makes it even easier to determine the program in which they

may share than it is to determine the program for children and young people. We have the heartening assurance that once we have found out these needs and interests and based our program upon them, people will avail themselves of their opportunities, especially if those opportunities are made easily accessible and may be readily embraced in the light of the adult time schedule and the demands of adult responsibilities.

In any case we do well to remember that the only basis of appeal of the church is the appeal of the enduring values inherent in religion. We can depend only upon the captivating power of the values it fosters and supports. This fact makes it all the more necessary for us to make basic in our planning, not only interests and needs, but also the situations that adults face and in which they must be Christian. We should ask ourselves, "What are these situations in which the Christian life is to be lived in which adults have a right to expect the aid and help and assistance of their church?"

### 3. Grouping Adults for Christian Education.

This is not the place for a discussion of grading adults. Various plans and points of view are offered to us.[3] Our point of view is that the most satisfactory, and most logical, basis of grouping is *functional grouping,* a grouping in which adults grade themselves, not on an age basis, but on the basis of interest and needs.

Some elements of the program will require no small groupings at all. The preaching service or public worship, some of the social and recreational programs, general meetings of different kinds for programs and lectures may be mass gatherings enlisting adults, or even adults and children and youth together.

Yet, even in connection with major enterprises in which the whole church may be interested and involved, it will often be desirable to break up into committees or commissions to study further into phases of the major activity. Such groupings may dis-

[3] For an extended discussion of this problem see the International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, *Christian Education of Adults.* Part I, pp. 125–130.

regard age altogether, young and old engaging themselves in a common project, the group being determined by the inherent appeal of the particular activity. Thus greater spontaneity is secured, cliques are discouraged, and there is a larger sense of unity and comradeship.

The same procedure may be followed in activities which involve only adults. Such arrangements make for variety, flexibility in program and procedure, and engender a democratic spirit, which is desirable.

This basis of grouping adults is particularly helpful in connection with study and discussion activities. Every unit in any inclusive or comprehensive curriculum of adult study provides a focusing point of interest or need about which a group, large or small, may be formed at least temporarily, for the duration of that unit. Thus, the basis for classwork becomes temporary functional or interest groupings rather than permanent classes.

This is not a new or strange idea to adults who have been in leadership education enterprises where groups have "flocked" about the course which they needed, or were interested in. The same idea has been used in church night institutes, where more than one course is offered, and in schools of religious education of one sort or another, including schools of missions, schools of stewardship, and the like. What is being suggested here is that we extend this plan and arrangement to many or most, if not to all, of the adult class groupings in the church, with full provision for the realignment and reconstitution of groups perhaps several times a year, all depending upon the nature of the enterprise under way.

A number of churches are making a start by offering at least one "short-term interest course" at the Sunday School hour, paralleling permanent classes using Uniform Lessons. These courses are open to the whole church constituency. When one is over, another is offered and a new group is formed for temporary work together.

The writer knows at least one church in which the men's broth-

erhood of the church divided according to vocations or professions. For several weeks these occupational groups studied the implications of their particular business for Christian living and a Christian social order. Then each group reported its findings and conclusions to the whole body of men. What might not happen if a group of bankers, merchants, lawyers, or what have you, would evaluate their particular line of work in the light of its contribution to Christian living? Or suppose that a group of laboring men and of employers should work together to find a Christian basis for the solution of their controversies and problems?

It is our conviction that if the church should, at least for part of the time, organize groups of adults about crucial issues and problems, and guide them in seeking and finding the way out, the whole church program would be vitalized.

One danger in following this plan must be squarely faced. How shall we avoid a fragmentary and one-sided curriculum, subject to the whims, fads, fancies, or hobbies of the leaders or the group, and one which will only "skim the cream" off the top of adult interests, leaving out of the program some of the basic and vital needs which are just as real but not so close to the surface and not so pressing? Our safeguard here will be some sort of curriculum study guide which will help in the direction of balance, sequence, comprehensiveness, and adequacy. Fortunately, such a guide is now available in the "Learning for Life" study program for adults.[4]

So we say: Larger groupings, all Adult Department or all church groupings for major worship, fellowship, social and recreational activities, with full recognition of special projects, interests, and abilities within this frame; then, temporary groupings for study and discussion activities, with a sufficient variety of opportunities being offered at any one time to meet, as far as possible, the range of differing interests and needs of adults; and, finally, definite organizational provision for church women and

[4] See the discussion of "Learning for Life" on pp. 83–86. Compare also *Learning for Life,* Educational Bulletin 410. (See Bibliography.)

churchmen as they do the work of the church in service and other activities. These phases will be dealt with later in this chapter where we will also discuss the matter of making provision for reaching the young adults, especially the younger married people, who are coming out of the Young People's group.

We may sum up our whole viewpoint and argument in one sentence: Let us make the church *God's university of opportunity for adult spiritual growth*. "University" means unity of purpose and program so that we may really get somewhere. It also means diversity to meet human needs.

### 4. Starting with What We Have Where We Are.

A traveler was somewhere in northern Kentucky bound for Cincinnati, Ohio, but had lost the way. Stopping his car, he inquired of a man along the road, "Can you tell me how to get to Cincinnati?"

"Well," was the response, "you go two miles straight down this road, and turn right. Go fifteen miles to the third crossroad, and take the left turn. Five miles from there is a fork, and I don't know which fork you take if there ain't any signboard there. Hang it all, mister, if I was goin' to Cincinnati I wouldn't start from here."

It is our conviction that if we are to move out into a larger situation in the church as far as adult education is concerned, we must start where we are and with what we have.

Every church has some present, ongoing adult organizations, agencies, and activities. These are by no means to be disparaged. They are not liabilities but assets, as we move out from a situation of many, and often fragmentary, adult programs, in the direction of a well-balanced and adequate adult church program. Such a program includes all the provisions made by the church for adult spiritual growth. As we move toward it we shall utilize and salvage everything of value in the present situation, ever keeping the needs of people to the fore and planning co-operatively each forward step we take.

## Chapter VII

# PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CHURCH FOR ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In this chapter we shall note those parts of the church program through which adults are being helped to grow, and suggest some ways in which they may be made more fruitful. Many of these activities center in "another organization." The tendency is for organizations to become quite conscious of themselves and to expand their particular program with a view to making it inclusive of much that others also may be doing at the same time. We shall, therefore, find some overlapping. On the other hand, because, initially at least, every organization started out to do one particular thing, we may expect to find a good deal of overlooking of crucial needs. We should not be surprised, therefore, to find a fairly large number of different activities. While we shall expect variety if the range of adult needs is to be met adequately, we can hardly avoid wondering if a person must join all these organizations in order to secure a well-rounded opportunity for growth. If he did, would he not get religious dyspepsia?

Now, to our listing: for convenience we suggest four major categories.

1. Activities for Which the Pastor Is Primarily Responsible.
2. Adult Classes and Study Groups.
3. Societies or Clubs for Men, for Women, for Mixed Groups.
4. The Church's Official and Other Leadership Groups.

### 1. Activities for Which the Pastor Is Primarily Responsible.

*a. The regular stated church services.* While the "regular Sunday services," often called the "church services of worship," are

open to all ages, and frequently special inducements are offered to secure the attendance of the young, they still remain primarily adult in program and in attendance. Even though the evening service is less formal than the morning service, the pattern is little different.

What is the purpose of these church services? "Worship," say an increasingly large number of ministers; "worship in which all ages and all kinds, conditions, and classes may take part."

This is certainly a heartening chorus. Worship is vital for all ages, and for no group more than for adults. Of all worship opportunities none is more dignified, more worthy, or more carefully planned than is the Sunday morning service. No other experience can take the place of this corporate worship. Here is one occasion when young and old may share in a common enterprise, and do share to the degree that the worship is planned, not for either of them, but for both.

But we hear another chorus: "The service is the preaching service. It is planned primarily for the sermon." Whether we agree or not, we are forced to recognize the fact that the success or failure of these church services is measured largely by the sermon. Even though the minister emphasizes worship, and tries to bring a message that will enhance the worship values of the service, he knows very well that he and his message are "on the spot." If anyone does not "enjoy the sermon" he is not likely to come again.

Of course, every minister knows that the real test of the value of preaching or worship or anything else is the degree to which personality is enriched and lives are changed in the direction of Christlikeness. If worship does not open the way for people to walk in closer fellowship with God, if the sermon does not stimulate the hearers to do something, to get into some activities through which they may really grow, then that worship and preaching leaves much to be desired. People must go beyond merely listening to sermons and talks; they must do more than simply attend services of worship.

Whatever we may think of it, the sermon, the lecture, and other

spoken messages are coming back into repute among educators. Recent books on adult education in the general field are giving high place to the lecture as a means of adult education.[1] Lyman Bryson assigns it a place of primary importance in nonscholastic programs, where busy people do not have time for the longer and more time-consuming forms of learning. A. D. Mueller devotes two chapters, sixty-one pages, to discussion and evaluation of the lecture as a method.

It is quite possible that it is the abuse, rather than the use, of the spoken message that has brought it so much adverse criticism. It may be just the stimulus needed to motivate people to take time for discussion and other procedures which are such fruitful means of adult learning. Certainly the use of the address over the radio has had something to do with its new lease on life. The minister would do well to study the technique of the successful radio speaker, who not only "gets the wave length" of his hearers but actually seems to enlist them in the processes of his thought as he goes along. The wisely planned and spoken sermon will be sure to bring the hearers into active co-operation with the speaker.

Dr. Earl F. Zeigler intimates that the failure of the sermon may not be that of the preacher, but rather of the hearers, who have not been led to discover the ways of appropriating and utilizing the values of the good sermon. Dr. Zeigler indicates ways in which the minister and his people may co-operate in the producing, as well as the utilizing, of sermons, while they are being planned, while they are being preached, and afterward.[2]

Perhaps the church services offer our greatest educational opportunity today. How many adults, children, or young people know how to worship with helpfulness to themselves or others? Have they ever been shown how to prepare for and participate in a church service with a view to realizing its highest possibilities for growth? Do they understand the nature, purpose, and technique

[1] Lyman Bryson, *Adult Education,* pp. 80–83, 90–94.
A. D. Mueller, *Principles and Methods of Adult Education,* pp. 250–350.
[2] E. F. Zeigler, *The Way of Adult Education,* pp. 125–128.

of worship so that they can enter into a service with some degree of expectation of success and achievement of fellowship with God? [3]

From whatever point we view it, the church service is a mighty potential means of adult education. We need to study this whole matter of worship and the sermon, their relationship to life, and their contribution in the total program of the church. The church service unquestionably affords the largest single opportunity the church now has to get in touch with adults.

*b. The week-night services, church night, schools of missions, schools of religion, et cetera.* Churches which, for reasons good or not so good, have abandoned the old-fashioned prayer meeting need not therefore abandon group prayer. A movement is growing to promote small fellowship groups which meet for prayer and study.[4] The midweek service, in one form or another, is still an established part of Protestant church activity.

An increasing number of churches plan for schools of various sorts and names, usually running from four to six weeks and offering a variety of courses from which selection is made according to desire and interest. Frequently the courses enlist young people, and even children, as well as their elders. Ordinarily, however, the midweek activity is mainly an adult enterprise, an adult school of religion, a "Learning for Life" school, a school in Christian living, or a university of life. Such enterprises afford opportunity for really significant work.

In some churches Leadership Education schools are planned in this connection, on either a local church or a community basis. Unfortunately, too many people still look upon leadership education as "teacher-training," meant for Sunday School teachers alone, and these activities, along with the societies for young people and children, are deemed apart from the pastor's primary concern. He

[3] See E. K. Reagin, *Principles of Personal Worship.* Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House.

[4] See the Educational Bulletin 404, *Personal Religious Living.* (See Bibliography, p. 203.)

is to run the church proper. Others will run the Sunday School, and the church societies and auxiliary organizations of whatever sort.

Today the emphasis upon the unity of the total church program is resulting in pastors' taking new interest in improving all the church leadership, not alone that in the so-called " educational organizations." The midweek hour offers one time to get at this church leadership group — those already in positions of trust and the prospective leaders as well.

*c. Pastoral calling and personal counseling.* With all that has been said about the fruitlessness of " pastoral calling," about ringing the doorbells of empty houses and pounding the pavements, the fact remains that the most successful minister is the man who gets closest to his people. To do this a man must go where his people are, in their homes, in their places of business. It is here that more lives are touched deeply and vitally than at any other point of a man's ministry. Incidentally, it is in his dealing with individuals that the average minister comes closest to using the methods of the Master Teacher, and may we say, using the best and most ideal educational method.

Pastoral calling yields fruit in two ways. On the one hand, the intimacy of pastoral contacts makes for richer preaching. On the other, a home-calling minister makes for a churchgoing people.

Many ministers, while they still make pastoral calls, are making it known that people may seek them out at certain hours and at a certain place. More and more men establish an office and keep office hours when they are available for personal conferences. A minister friend writes:

" Up until the last eighteen months I was opposed to the minister assuming the position of domestic and personal counselor in his parish. I felt that it was well to assist any who might seek counsel without having it known that that was a part of one's ministry. Each year more and more people have been consulting me in one way or another, and in practically every instance they apologize for intruding on my time. Because of this attitude of apology,

I made public announcement about two months ago in our church paper, and it was also published in other papers, that a portion of my time would be given to domestic and personal counseling.

"I have not been counseling large numbers but I have seen astounding results. It has done something for me which is difficult to explain, and I firmly believe now, as I did not in former years, that wise, sympathetic counseling should have a larger place in the church."

This particular man does not set aside a definite period of time when people may seek him out. He feels that, although a few do come to the office, by far the larger number are helped by making definite appointments at some other place than the church.

"But," someone may ask, "does not one need special training and equipment to do this sort of thing helpfully?"

The answer is that all the training a minister can possibly get is much to be desired. However, two other things may also be said. A man who has sympathy and is a good listener, who has some degree of common sense, can be exceedingly helpful to folks. That man will be more helpful, of course, if he has been fortunate enough to come from a seminary where opportunity is afforded for special courses in this general field. Incidentally, it is heartening to see such courses being introduced into the seminary curriculums.

Another fact to be borne in mind is that it is the counselor himself, with his attitude toward life and its problems, who will carry fully as much weight as any words of wisdom he may speak. Also, a man should be quick to recognize it when he gets a case which is beyond his ability, knowledge, and skill. He then may suggest a conference with someone who is more able than he. Even though the church may not have a staff of specialists, in most communities there are medical men, or professional men in different fields, or wise women, who may be called upon for special types of cases, or who may be suggested as possible sources of helpfulness.

Sometimes the very fact that the person has a chance to "unload," to tell his story to someone who will take the time to hear

him all through, accomplishes a great deal. Who cannot be at least a sympathetic listener?

A young woman came to her college teacher, a man of rare judgment and broad sympathy. For almost an hour she talked, her professor saying hardly a word, except here and there to ask a question to help over a rough place. Then he said, "Let me think about it a little while; then I'll tell you what you ought to do."

"Why," was the answer, "you don't need to tell me. I know what to do now, but I didn't know when I came in."

The fact was that in the very telling of her story the mists had cleared, helped by the appreciation and the sympathy of the listener. The way was plain. A seeker had found the much-sought help through contact with a helper, if not as a result of his wisdom expressed in words.

Do people want such help from their minister? Look about you. See what is happening in the ministry of those who are doing this kind of thing. Witness the wistful hunger of people for religious reality. See how they will purchase and read a book like the one by Henry C. Link, in which he records his *Return to Religion*. Note the testimony of Dr. Link to the fact that people are groping for the verities of life, that they are seeking some sure foundation. This is not, in Dr. Link's case, mere supposition. His judgment is based upon dealing with some four thousand individuals during a period of fifteen years. Urging these people to lay hold on the resources of religion finally led the psychologist himself to see his own need of that which he was recommending to others. His book was a best seller because people are seeking reality today as perhaps never before.

Jesus put in most of his time guiding the spiritual experience of a small and intimate face-to-face group, his disciples. Again and again we find him meeting individuals and ministering to them in their need. Go through the New Testament and see how many times the Master is reported as dealing with men one by one. He had time and took time to deal with one at a time. Shall we not follow him in doing that very thing today?

## 2. Adult Classes and Study Groups.

*a. The adult Bible class or Adult Church School Department.* On the basis of a study reported in 1930,[5] about 9.9 per cent of all the adults of the United States are enrolled in Sunday Schools — Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. The adult Protestant population of the United States is a little better than 45,000,000. These figures would indicate a Bible class enrollment of over 4,000,000 adults — a sizable group.

The adult classes of the nation offer one of the greatest educational opportunities the church has, if they are wisely directed and become vitally concerned about adult spiritual growth. Their value will depend, not upon the numbers enrolled, but rather upon what is happening in lives as the result of this relationship to the church.

Several questions present themselves and must be considered.

What shall we do about the class which is so wrapped up in itself that it cannot see anything else?

There are some classes that refuse to participate as members of the Church Schools under whose auspices they meet. They will not, for instance, share in the common exercises of the school; they will not put their offerings into its treasury, et cetera. Such groups have become so " class-conscious " that they miss the very purpose of their existence. Their energy is far too frequently used in building up the class, which thus becomes an end in itself rather than a means to the great end of the church.

A rather amusing illustration comes from an Eastern city. A woman was brought in for a series of Sunday mornings to lead a class of mothers in discussing the religious education of little children. Other mothers, in the various adult classes, discovered what was going on and decided to enter this group, some of them actually doing so. The result was a protest from the adult class teachers and officers on the ground that " our classes are being

[5] Address of Paul H. Vieth, at the Toronto Convention of the International Council of Religious Education.

wrecked." When the suggestion was made that perhaps mothers might be excused for a few Sundays to avail themselves of the unusual opportunity offered, with the understanding that they would come back to the regular class when the course for mothers was concluded, hot resentment was aroused. "Our classes are being broken up!" To have a big attendance, to build up the class, seemed more important than to meet the needs of adults.

What about the class that becomes a substitute for the church service of worship?

A prominent layman told of a campaign for new members for the men's class of his church. The class leadership was alert and aggressive. The program was better and more appealing than most. When the "pressure was turned on," this layman refused to join, saying: "But I like to go to church on Sunday morning. Why should I go to two services? You go to the class and leave; I prefer the church service. We're even, and you don't need to turn the heat on me!" Behind such an attitude as this is a body of experience. Strong leadership, for only strong leadership can command adults, has built up an institution which conceives of itself as such. High-powered speakers who will attract attendance are often imported. The permanent teacher is an outstanding professional or businessman of real leadership ability. In some cases the pastor himself is the teacher, especially if it is a men's group.

So we have another congregation and the class becomes, for its members, a substitute for the church service. Indeed it *is* really another preaching service, with its worship and then a vital message earnestly delivered. If the members come to the church service, they will simply have more worship and another message, all within a period of two hours. Many of them like the less formal procedure of the class better than the more formal service of church worship. Therefore they elect to take the one and not the other. If the pastor is the teacher, he is competing with himself; if someone else is teacher, he is competing with the minister.

A pastor was lamenting the fact that the members of his large

class never darkened the door of the church service and asked the visiting minister to "talk with some of my men about it." One man said, "I like what our pastor does in the class much better than what he does in the church service." Another added, "Yes, in the class he gets you where the hair is short; he hits you right between the eyes." A third remarked: "In the class he is following a course; I like that. In the church service you never can tell where the lightning is going to strike."

Now, surely, no one will wish to disparage the good work done by such classes as have been described. Many a person is won into the life of the church through such groups and their aggressive work. We must not lose the values that are here. However, the question remains: Is this the ideal? What is the real function of an adult class in the Church School? Is it a substitute for anything?

Before dealing with these questions, we raise an additional question: What about the class that just drags along and gets nowhere? A church official remarked, "When a person goes into the average adult Bible class in a —— church, he has to park his intelligence on the church steps before he goes in." You may say that this is a rather harsh judgment, but unfortunately there are classes like that. The writer was in one, one Sunday. It was taught by a very devout woman who said that no one else would take the class so she had to do it. This woman evidently did not know the purpose of a class; nor did she know how to teach.

The time was spent reading the "lesson notes" from the Quarterly, turn about. The women present, none of whom would offend the teacher, meekly read the explanatory notes on the lesson text, although some conversed with each other when a woman at one end of the long pew read in a voice which was inaudible four feet away.

It is this type of procedure that has led many recent writers to put a big question mark in sight when the adult Bible class is mentioned. Fortunately, the picture just presented is not the only one to be seen. Even though we should grant that classes are as

inefficient as they are charged with being, that is no reason why the adult Bible class may not become effective as an educational opportunity of the first magnitude. If it is now a noneducational institution, if it now confirms as many prejudices as it allays, if it now creates more problems than it solves, if it now spends more time studying the map of Palestine than it does in making a Christian community, all this can be changed. The fact remains that "the church has no group of higher stature within its membership. If the church is ever to take religious education in earnest, and if adult education is to change some of the present disturbing conditions, the members of the adult Bible class are awaiting the call. Let the church think thrice before condemning these men and women as obstructionists. It is they who formed the bulwark of temperance reform a decade or two ago, and there is hope of their taking the leadership in the church's present efforts to meet threatened world catastrophe. Their possibilities should be discovered, their leadership stimulated. Perhaps, like Esther of ancient days, the adult Bible class has 'come to the kingdom for such a time as this.' But it must study a wider range of both the Bible and today's issues. It must put more emphasis upon the laws of learning and check itself on its power to change its millions into constructive Christians. Let someone search out its possibilities." [6]

In plumbing the possibilities of the adult class as an educational force, several principles should be borne in mind:

First, the adult Bible class or Adult Church School Department is only *part of the total adult program*. Its relationship to the rest of the program should not be competitive but supplemental. It may be that the movement toward organized classes, with recognition of such classes by denominational and interdenominational agencies, has aggravated the situation. In some centers there is disposition now to *minor* the organized class and *major* the Adult Department, within which the groupings for study are quite fluid

[6] E. F. Zeigler, *Toward Understanding Adults*, p. 107. Used by permission of The Westminster Press.

and subject to various rearrangements through offering different courses for election by those interested.

Some departments make their start by offering *one* short-term elective course, along with the other ongoing classes. In other cases the whole program is organized as a " Learning for Life " school or a school in Christian living, with a " battery " of courses being offered and the way clear for adults to elect the one in which they are most interested. When these courses are over, a new battery of courses displaces the first one.[7]

The writer has just discovered a church where seven or eight ordinary Bible classes were displaced by a real school of religion. The year is divided into a first semester, second semester, and summer session, four months in each period. During the first semester, seven courses were offered, one of them for persons who wanted to study the Uniform Lessons. The second semester five different courses were offered. No teacher who taught during the first semester was scheduled for the second. Here is a church that takes the adult class seriously and opens the opportunity to the whole adult constituency.

Secondly, the primary function of the adult class is the discovery of truth and the interpretation of present knowledge and experience.

The adult class, no matter when it meets, is a place for study and discussion. Such worship as there is should be incidental, or should be along the line of training in the meaning of worship, its purpose and function, its materials and methods.

While the lecture, the sermon, and the address have their place in the adult program, that place is not in the class period, which should be given over to thinking under guidance, to discussion and evaluation, to determining courses of Christian action. Facts are to be presented and frankly faced and evaluated in the light of Christian principles. The process should be participated in by all

[7] For full information about this plan, see the two Educational Bulletins of the United Christian Adult Movement, *Learning for Life* and *Schools in Christian Living*. (See Bibliography.)

the group; therefore, the group needs to be small, not more than twenty or twenty-five, for the best work. This is particularly true when the study deals with the application in daily life of the principles and ideals of Christian living.

Even the Bible study course, or the historical study, is best furthered by active participation. It should not be a listening procedure, but rather a guided tour, with opportunity for questions, for comparing opinions, for evaluation of positions taken. If people passively "listen," there is question as to the degree of growth which takes place.

When a group ventures into new and uncharted areas of truth, there should be plenty of chance for earnest discussion. The mind must be engaged in the examination and testing of the new truth. Few people can read or listen critically and creatively. In listening to the spoken message the effort to follow the line of thought prevents weighing the evidence at the time when it is presented. If you stop to think, you lose something. Without opportunity for discussion, most people never master even their own thought. People may have a vague sense of assent or of disagreement while listening to an address or lecture, but they cannot probe the grounds of these feelings or discover the precise points of their agreement or otherwise without opportunity for thought and discussion. Discussion affords the chance for making plain to themselves their judgment on what they have heard as they express their judgment to others. It also opens the way for comparison with the judgment of others and the weighing of evidence on all sides of a problem. From the standpoint of the teacher or leader, discussion affords a way of finding out how far he has succeeded in expressing his convictions and the degree to which the group has grasped what has been presented and come to a common mind about it.

Thirdly, the test of the effectiveness of the class is, not numbers, but changed persons. Here the class has its distinctive and unique function to perform. It is not to be a congregation but rather to accomplish that which cannot be done in the congregation. In fact, the more like a congregation it is in size, method, and program, the

less likely it is to fulfill its purpose. That purpose is to break up the congregation into small groups, where, through the discovery of new truth, lives may be transformed. The large group can listen. But learning goes on best in the intimate fellowship and contacts of the small group, where issues are faced and thoroughly and freely discussed. There truth may be set over against truth; there new and better ways of action may be planned and carried out; there experiences may be shared with utter frankness and with freedom; there tested ways of action may be reported and tried out in Christian living. Thus the class activity supplements; and the more supplementary it is, the more valuable it becomes as a means of transforming lives.

At this point someone is likely to raise the question about the desirability of having men's classes for men, women's classes for women, and whether or not we should have mixed classes. This question leads us to another principle.

Fourthly, the arrangements for determining the personnel of classes or other groups will largely depend upon the *purpose in view,* and *the nature of the study opportunity* afforded.

How this applies to other groups than adult classes we shall see later, but here we are concerned with its relationship to study groups. The type of opportunity offered for study and investigation will control the situation. If we are to have a Mothers' Class, where there is to be intimate study of the needs and care of little children, that is one thing. If we are planning to help parents to discover how the home and church may co-operate more effectively, we shall want fathers as well as mothers present. Some types of study interest one sex or the other; some will appeal to both. If we plan to provide an opportunity for well-rounded development, we cannot make the matter of sex, or age, or anything but the inherent appeal of the particular undertaking, the deciding factor in determining the personnel of our learning group.

*b. Other class or study or discussion groups.* We think here of those less formal but no less significant groups, such as a mission

study class in connection with the women's work or the occasional group which may form for a particular purpose for a brief time, under whatever sponsorship or auspices.

Too frequently these activities bear little or no relationship to each other or to the general study and discussion opportunities that the church affords. Every church has many "bits" of program scattered along through the year, sometimes fostered by one group, sometimes by another. All these would take on added significance if they were related to each other and if that relationship were obvious. The mission study class referred to above has value in itself but would take on added importance if it were geared into the adult program and seen as *a part of it* instead of being *apart from it,* as an isolated item. All these may be integrated into the total adult program if the pastor and other leaders of adults will work more closely together with a larger consciousness of *an adult program of the church.*

*c. "Learning for Life" groups.* The study program for adults, called "Learning for Life," [8] has stimulated "Learning for Life" schools, which meet on various schedules, usually once a week for a minimum of six weeks on a Sunday night or a week night. Some of these "schools" are offered at a series of Sunday morning Church School sessions. Four or more courses operate simultaneously in such an enterprise. By offering two periods per session, it is possible either to shorten the school or to double the time in class periods. One denomination — the former Methodist Episcopal Church South — has been very successful in promoting these schools in local churches.

The "Learning for Life" plan affords a basis for correlating all the class activities that a local church provides through using Bulletin 410 as a chart and following the suggestions made for administration of the study program for the *adult department of the church.* Some courses will be offered through the Sunday Church School, others in the midweek service, and still others on evenings or afternoons. The men and the women, in their separate pro-

[8] Described on pp. 83–86.

grams, may utilize many of the courses, including the current mission study courses, both home and foreign.

Because these units are on the short-term interest basis and find adults where they are conscious of need, they reach many who are not enlisted in the Sunday School classes.

### 3. Societies or Clubs for Men, for Women, for Mixed Groups.

Most of these agencies meet on weekdays or week nights. The *time* of meeting, as well as the purpose or program, determines the personnel, at least as far as sex is concerned. Men cannot ordinarily attend day meetings. Mothers, especially of small children, find it hard to be away from home in the evening.

The discussion of plans for unifying and correlating these agencies and activities will be found in Chapter IX. Here we shall simply state the situation as it exists in most churches, with some indication of how these groups may be used more effectively.

*a. The Women's Missionary Society.* This is a familiar agency in most churches. If the changing of attitudes, enlarging and universalizing of interests, and developing habits of service are tests of educational effectiveness, then the Women's Missionary Society has been a successful enterprise. If more church officers had the vision and concern of these women, the whole church would be better off. Missionary women study, pray, work, and give. Unfortunately, in most churches, they constitute a very small proportion of the total adult church or even of the adult women.

Ideally, the church itself is a missionary society. It is unfortunate that missions is so frequently carried by a few women. Just so long as we permit missions to be an elective, chosen by a few of the older women, just so long will missions fail to be the main business of the whole church, men as well as women, young people as well as adults. True enough, there are a few men's missionary societies in existence, but here again the elective principle implies that the whole church is interested in something else.

Wherever such societies operate they might be conceived of as simply one of the channels through which the church is working, and see their task as that of focusing the attention of the whole church on its missionary purpose and task. Fortunately, this idea is coming to the fore as denominational headquarters are facing the whole work of the church and taking steps to unify its program, including missions, not as something added on, but as something that is an integral part of the Christian's life and work. The steps now being taken in many churches to unify the work of church women are a move in this direction also.[9]

*b. The Ladies' Aid or other women's societies.* The Ladies' Aid or Pastor's Aid societies usually enlist more church women than do the missionary societies. While the largest possibilities of these groups have been somewhat dissipated by the almost exclusive emphasis on raising money to pay off the mortgage or to buy a new carpet, yet these groups have great potential educational values. Among these are:

(1) Opportunity for social contacts and social fellowship.
(2) Opportunities for rendering service within the church and community particularly.
(3) Providing needed equipment and other necessities which will strengthen various parts of the church's work.
(4) Raising money.

While these four functions are fairly typical, in most churches the Ladies' Aid Society has not been looked upon as an educational agency at all. This situation, however, is rapidly being changed, as the women of the church unite themselves together for fellowship and service, with all the implications of these experiences for Christian growth.

*c. The "inclusive type" of women's association.* An aggressive move is on in the direction of unifying the women's work of local churches. In some denominations progress is impeded by the denominational setup, which tends to perpetuate separate

[9] See Chapter IX, section 1.

groupings; in other cases the overhead agencies are speeding the day of unified women's work. The conviction is gaining ground that we must deal with adults as adults interested in the whole work of the church, rather than on the basis of small group interests or loyalties.

Today in more and more churches will be found one women's organization, with one set of officers, enlisting practically all the women of the church in a program which is inclusive of every phase of the work of the church in which women are involved.[10]

*d. Men's Fellowships or Brotherhoods.* Many churches have a men's organization designed to unite the men of the church for fellowship and inspiration. In some cases this is just another unrelated adult organization bidding for the interest, the time, and the efforts of the men; in other cases it is a real means of marshaling the man power of the church in the work of the church. Unfortunately, most men's brotherhoods tend to be ends in themselves, rather than means or channels through which the men of the church can effectively function. Such organizations should not be substitutes for or competitors with the church. They should be a part of the adult department of the church, meeting for fellowship and planning for service and backing every worthy phase of the church's activity. In all that church men do and are interested in, the Brotherhood will concern itself.[11]

### 4. The Church's Official and Other Leadership Groups.

*a. Church officers.* The fact that a person has been selected as one of a church's official group ought to mean additional opportunity for growth as well as for service. Next to the people with whom we live intimately, the greatest influence in our lives is the work we do and into which we throw ourselves with abandon. This fact invests official and leadership positions with a new signifi-

[10] This newer plan of organizing the women is discussed in detail in Chapter IX, section 1.

[11] The setup of a men's organization is discussed in detail in Chapter IX, section 2.

cance as an educational opportunity. The church asks, " Will —— make a good church officer? " The man or woman who accepts this responsibility has every right to ask, " Will this position offer a larger chance for my spiritual growth? "

In many cases the only time the church's officers ever come together as a group is when they meet in their official capacity. Why not utilize this occasion for the growth of these leaders, not only growth in official leadership but growth in Christian life and experience as well.

There are some groups which set aside half or three quarters of an hour of their stated meetings for study and discussion of vital religious themes.

Members of the vestry of All Saints' Episcopal Church, Pontiac, Michigan, expressed a desire for their rector to discuss with them, as a part of the vestry meeting, their own problems of religious faith and life. The discussion started in the vestry room but was too interesting to remain there. The men told their wives; they told others; and soon the rector was asked why the whole congregation should not enjoy and profit by these discussions. So, Sunday by Sunday, this minister presented to his congregation the material these " hardboiled " businessmen thought would be good for their souls and help them to do the church's official business better.[12]

What more profitable thing could a group like that do than spend a part of its monthly meeting in discussing such a study as *Toward a Vital Christian Experience,*[13] which is suggested in *Learning for Life?* Any course on the work of the church or on personal faith and experience might well be used.

Many churches have joint meetings occasionally of all the official groups in the church, with a view to helping those with distinctive responsibilities to face the total church program with unity of effort. Under the wise guidance of the pastor, this procedure may become a vital part of the church's program for developing dy-

[12] *Detroit News,* October 29, 1938.

[13] By John A. McAfee. The Westminster Press, 1937.

namic Christian persons, as well as contributing to greater official efficiency.

In other cases, special provision is made for church officers in connection with adult schools of religion or church night institutes, which offer a variety of courses. These classes may well discuss any "Learning for Life" course, as well as ways of doing a better job of leadership in their specific fields. Such groups have a special appeal and are among the most largely attended when these arrangements are made.

The possibilities of growth are especially enhanced if these officers are actually functioning in the leadership of the church's educational program. Even in churches where the trustees are accustomed to be merely financial officers, ways are being found to relate these persons to some vital phase of the program which has to do with promoting the growth of others. As they discharge this responsibility, their own lives are immeasurably enriched and growth comes through the giving of self in helping others. The implications of their particular task as it is related to the spiritual functions of the church is something many church officers have never faced.

"Will he make a good church officer?" Ah, yes, but what kind of *Christian man* will being an officer of this church *make him?*

*b. Other church leadership groups.* What has been said about church officers applies with equal force to all persons who are in positions of leadership responsibility. We are thinking of the Church School officers and teachers and the leaders of church organizations or groups of any sort.[14]

Has not the time come for the church to set itself definitely as it has not yet done, to help its workers to do their jobs with distinction, with helpfulness to others, and with real zest as far as they themselves are concerned? Any group of leaders will be eager to find ways of carrying the load with greater ease and greater success. The task in and of itself affords a real means of growth if proper and stimulating guidance is afforded. In the workers'

[14] See also Chapter X, "Leadership in the Church's Adult Program."

conference, the teachers' meeting, the gathering of the council of Christian education, the annual planning conference of all the workers, the alert and aggressive church will find an unsurpassed opportunity of opening doors into richer faith and experience. These meetings may be the only chance some of these persons will have for growth through group experiences. Why not help people to grow on the job and through their job?

## Chapter VIII

# HOW SHALL WE ORGANIZE ADULTS?

### 1. The Function of "Organization."

"Organization" does not necessarily mean a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer. It simply means people working together efficiently in getting things done expeditiously. Organization is the way we marshal our resources for effective functioning.

In achieving efficient organization we may develop *organizations*. These organizations are simply means to the better achievement of our goals. Each necessary organization should be related to some spiritual purpose which calls it into being, a means to the better accomplishment of that purpose. In carrying out its spiritual purpose, the church will create agencies and employ them in making the adult program effective and meaningful. Each of these necessary agencies will be the church itself functioning in a particular way, and should have no meaning apart from that. Few organizations should be permanent. However many of these agencies there may be, all of them will be working together in common cause, each a means to the end of the church. We do well to bear in mind that "any aspect of Christianity which is sufficiently important to justify a special organization to promote it and provide it in case the church is neglecting it, is important enough to be given a vital place in the program of the church itself. As soon as it has won that place, the work of the special agency is done. It ought to rejoice in its good work and yield up its identity. If, instead, it becomes institutionalized and goes on, it becomes the real enemy of the cause for which it was started, since its continued existence implies that this cause, after all, is not an integral part of the total church program. . . . To have various special and elec-

tive or optional agencies carrying essential aspects of the Christian enterprise is to impoverish the program of the church itself." [1]

## 2. What Are the Principles of Sound Organization?

*a.* In dealing with the previous question we have already indicated the first principle of sound organization in the church: *Spiritual needs should be primary, organization secondary.*

*b. Organization should be as simple as it is possible for it to be without interfering with effectiveness.* Some people seem to think that the more complex we make the organizational situation, the better. The contrary is true.

*c. The organization should be flexible.* The situation should not be static or rigid. It should be possible at any time to revamp the organizational picture in the interest of greater effectiveness. With our automobiles we " cash in on the old car," by getting as much for it as we can, and ride along merrily with the new one. Why not do the same thing with our church organization?

*d. The organization should be indigenous.* Every church has its own peculiar and unique situations to face. While in general the organization of different churches may be alike, there is a very real sense in which each church must develop its own pattern, adapted to meeting its particular needs.

*e. The organization should be democratically achieved.* The particular setup in a local church is to be determined, not arbitrarily by the pastor or other leader, but by all the leaders sitting down together with the pastor, and, before the matter is finally determined, by bringing into the discussion the representatives of the adults who are led or, better still, the whole adult constituency of the church.

*f. The form or organization adopted should be in its very nature a unifying force.* We are here thinking of the way the whole situation is set up. Some patterns of organization are in their very nature a means of dissipating unity; they are disintegrating in-

[1] H. C. Munro, *The Pastor and Religious Education,* pp. 46, 47.

fluences. Others bind the various parts more closely together and thus provide one of the most needed of educational experiences.

### 3. How Far Are These Principles Observed by the Church?

A survey of the situation in the average church will indicate that we are in one way and another violating some of the principles suggested above. Each person will have to answer the question as far as his own church is concerned.

Are we organization-minded or are organizations secondary rather than primary? Is our setup simple and so flexible that it is easily modifiable in the light of changing needs and situations? Did our agencies originate from within the church out of the needs of people or have they been added on from the outside? Has our setup been democratically developed? Is its very nature unifying rather than the opposite?

### 4. A Survey — What Do We Have in Our Church?

Let each reader take a large sheet of paper. Across the top list every activity your church provides for adult spiritual growth. Be sure that the list is complete. Down the left-hand side place the following program emphases:

Worship.
Knowledge (includes Bible study and all activities that lead to religious knowledge).
Service and Support (includes missions, social service).
Social Life and Recreation.
Family Religion and Parent Education.
Social Action and Social Reconstruction (includes citizenship in community, nation, world).
Developing Church Leaders.
Deepening Christian Fellowship.

Now draw the cross lines, vertical and horizontal, and in the squares thus made evaluate each activity in terms of the contribution it makes to growth, using the following symbols:

⊕ — Major purpose and emphasis. × — Some emphasis.
○ — Secondary emphasis. | — Slight emphasis.

The sample chart given below illustrates how to do this diagrammatically. Use this chart as the basis of indicating the emphases of the present program and possible gaps. In considering your situation, you may well ask several questions:

a. What needs are not being met at all?
b. What needs are being only partially met?
c. Are some things being overemphasized?
d. What indications are there of overlapping?
e. Is too much provision made for some needs in the light of others which are not so adequately met?
f. Have we provided adequately for the needs of young adults? (On this latter point see the discussion in Chapter IX, section 3.)

A Minimum Provision for Meeting Adult Needs Through the Church

| | Church Services of Worship | Mid-week Services, etc. | Sunday Church School | Women's Association | Joint | Men's Fellowship or Brotherhood |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Worship | ⊕ | × | × | \| | | \| |
| Knowledge | | ⊕ | ⊕ | × | = | × |
| Service and Support | | | \| | ⊕ | = | ⊕ |
| Social Life and Recreation | | | \| | ⊕ | = | ⊕ |
| Family Religion and Parent Education | | ⊕ | \| | × | = | × |
| Social Action and Social Reconstruction | | \| | × | ⊕ | = | ⊕ |
| Developing Church Leaders | | ⊕ | \| | ○ | = | ○ |
| Deepening Christian Fellowship | ⊕ | ○ | × | ○ | = | ○ |

**5. Problems Created by the Present Situation.**

The survey of your church just made will reveal, at least in many cases, several problems which we need to face frankly and fearlessly.

*a.* The first is the fact that *we have a multiplicity of organizations.* We are organization-minded. There are some grounds for the statement that if three Americans are together anywhere they will form a committee, elect a chairman, and organize a program. When a particular need has arisen in the church or has been felt by the leaders, we have started a new organization. We seem not to have raised the question about expanding the program of present organizations to meet the situation. The need is real, so we create another " auxiliary " to the church, which becomes a permanent institution. In few instances have leaders sat down together, and, on the basis of the needs of adults, developed a complete and well-articulated program to meet those needs. The average situation reminds us of Topsy, who just " growed." The result is many different organizations and a complex situation in the adult part of the church program. Perhaps we are even overorganized; we certainly have wheels within wheels.

*b.* A second problem is that of *overlapping programs.* As organizations get under way and are successful and important, they tend to reach out and become more general in their programs. Soon there is overlapping, and in some cases actual competition. Each organization plans its own program as though it were responsible for the whole of the Christian life and was the only agency at work.

*c.* The third problem is *overlooking.* Often this is more serious than the overlapping. When there is duplication of effort and program, a person has to *take his choice,* and will do so along the line of major interest in some program emphasis. He is thus in danger of leaving out something very important to a well-rounded growth.

How this works out is well illustrated in the matter of missions. A minister was heard to say to a woman who was being welcomed

into his church as a new member, "You will want to identify yourself with some of the organizations of our church. If you are interested in missions, see Mrs. —— and join the Women's Missionary Society. If you are not interested in missions, see Mrs. —— and join the Ladies' Aid Society." One wonders what the minister would have said to a man. There was no missionary society for him. Should such a thing have been said at all? Can one have one's religion with or without missions, as one chooses, according to inclination or financial arrangements? Can one be a Christian and overlook missions altogether? When a person unites with a church, is not that uniting with a missionary society? To identify missions with one of the "auxiliary organizations" which one has to join in addition to joining the church makes missions an elective. If it is that, there is grave danger that missions will not be a part of the life of the whole church, as it should be. Missions will be simply another "elective."

When we have many organizations, each with its special interest, and people elect the one and not the other, something is bound to be left out of their life experience; some important needs will not be met at all, or met inadequately.

*d.* A fourth problem is the *large number of unreached people.* In church after church a careful survey discloses that the majority of the adults are unidentified with even one of the existing organizations or activities. Some do elect to attend the "morning preaching service," but nothing else. No organization, with its special interest, is appealing enough to attract them; therefore they are outside all of them. The difference in the situation where there is, for instance, a unified women's association which comprehends all the interests of the whole church indicates that the work of the church is commanding enough to enlist all the women, and among them the younger women, of the parish.[2]

*e.* A fifth problem is *the way organizations become ends in themselves rather than means to the end of the church.*

*f.* Another difficulty is the danger of *disunity of Christian ex-*

[2] Compare pp. 138–143.

*perience* brought about by the confusion of many organizations with overlapping memberships and overlapping programs. A church recently visited had sixty women actively identified with its women's work. These women were almost all members of three different organizations, each one making its bid for time and attention and energy. There was little sense of a *church program* through which they were being guided to larger growth.

The various phases of Christian experience, such as worship, study, service, and the rest should be so related to one another, so integrated, as to form a unified whole. This is hardly possible with a multiplicity of unrelated programs. "A symmetrical, well-balanced Christian personality will develop out of a symmetrical, well-balanced experience of Christian living. Such an experience will not be provided except by a well-balanced and well-co-ordinated program." [3] If adult Christian experience is to be really significant in developing a well-integrated personality, there is laid upon the church the inescapable responsibility of being a unifying force in a world where there are so many disintegrating influences.

### 6. A Possible Pattern of Organization of the Church for Effective Adult Work.

Every church should have an Adult Committee or Adult Cabinet, which is responsible for supervision and oversight of the adult program. This idea is already familiar in children's work and young people's work. The cabinet should be composed of at least one representative from each adult organization or agency or activity in the church. In many churches there are two representatives from each agency. This group will face the total adult program of the church in terms of the adult program as presented in this book. The pastor should be a member of the cabinet. In many cases he will be its chairman. In a church with many adult Sunday Church School classes, this cabinet may be a rather large group. In that case it may be wise to have a small executive committee of the cabinet to make recommendations to it and to carry

[3] H. C. Munro, *The Pastor and Religious Education*, p. 47.

responsibilities assigned by the cabinet. If the cabinet includes not more than eight or ten persons, an executive committee may be unnecessary.

This Adult Cabinet will be related, of course, to the general setup of the church as it is organized to carry out its educational function. Just because the adult group is the one involved, it should not be separated from the total church program. Whether the official board of the church, or a special educational committee or board of Christian education is responsible for the administering of the educational program, the Adult Cabinet will be related to that agency as are the other age group cabinets, even in such matters as the selection of leadership of adult activities.[4]

The cabinet will ordinarily function in one of two ways: through the "Cabinet Plan" of organization or through the "Church Plan."

*a. The Cabinet Plan.* In some cases the cabinet, constituted as indicated above, will simply be the means to a *loose correlation of adult agencies.* It will help these agencies to keep out of one another's way and perhaps unite them all in undertaking some enterprises which are not now being carried on by any of them. It may even make some assignments of responsibility with a view to avoiding overlapping and possible conflict of program. It would try to balance activities and so arrange for a particular adult to have as well-rounded and complete an experience as possible.

In other cases the cabinet will be the means to a *close correlation of agencies.* It will actually plan the total program and make assignment to agencies of parts of it. Such a plan might eventually make for the "federation" or even the "unifying" of agencies for more effective work. Under the cabinet itself, phases of the program not easily assignable and not otherwise provided would be carried on. Thus the needs of adults would be adequately met.

*b. The Church Plan.* Here we would have an *adult department* of the church. Its program would include provision for meeting all

[4] See *Adults in Action,* Educational Bulletin 402. (See Bibliography.)

the spiritual needs of adults. It would be the church functioning efficiently in the adult field. All the essential elements of a complete program would be available and utilized,[5] all of them under the careful supervision of the pastor and the cabinet, for under this plan the pastor should head the cabinet. The adult program would be one unified whole, carried out by such organizations and agencies as may be set up. These agencies would be means, not ends; servants, not bosses. The program would be a *unit,* well-balanced, correlated, comprehensive. Opportunities for worship, study, fellowship, social life, recreation, reading, service, missionary and evangelistic activities, and social action and social reconstruction would be afforded all the men and women of the church without overlapping or duplication of effort. While this arrangement would not necessarily mean less activities, it would so manage these activities that adults would find them more easily accessible, better adapted to their particular time schedule. All the days of the week would be used but not everybody would be expected to come every day.

One church, for instance, carried on two identical study programs on Tuesday and Thursday nights, finding that by that arrangement more adults could share in it. The fact is that "through the development of a program based on the needs of people and their time allowance, the church can enlarge the educational, social, recreational, and spiritual ministries until the seven-day-a-week church is the rule rather than the exception." [6] Such a program as we are envisaging will be for all adults, planned by the adults and carried out under authorization of and on behalf of the adult department of the church.

In some churches this plan may even afford adults some part in planning the church services of worship. As has already been pointed out in this book, adults, children, and young people need more projects in common. In the service of common worship

[5] Compare Chapter V.

[6] E. F. Zeigler, *Toward Understanding Adults,* p. 84. Compare pp. 82–96 of Dr. Zeigler's book.

all age groups might be brought together in a joint activity planned for their wholehearted participation.

In other churches this departmental plan leads to a " graded church " arrangement, with worship services for the three major departments — children, young people, adults.

As has been said above, the first step in the direction of a church plan may be the cabinet plan, with even the loose correlation of agencies. In this plan adult classes would be just as subject to the arrangements as other agencies. Classes would be formed in temporary groupings for special enterprises. The situation would be exceedingly *fluid*.[7]

To sum the whole matter up, what we need is not so much an educational machine or organization as an " educative and educable spirit," not " new organization, but a quickened organism " — the church. The whole church constituency may be regarded as a " College of Students." The Apostle Paul declares [8] that the Christian church should be ordered upon the principle that diversity of gifts is for the common good and that all members may profit by this very variety. " The church is God's university. We do not all dwell in one place. We are not all of the same college. We have varying abilities, variously applied. We study subjects relating to truth from different angles, and with an independence of particular emphasis. But all the knowledge of truth that we win, every achievement in application that is wrought out, each incident of progress . . . is common to the whole body." [9]

### 7. Some Suggestions as to Procedure.

The exact steps to be taken will depend wholly upon the local situation. Some churches have strong adult organizations centering in strong personalities who are jealous of their prerogatives. Others will find their leaders ready and eager for forward steps.

[7] See the discussion on pp. 101–104.

[8] I Cor., ch. 12.

[9] Woodard, Alfred L., Bishop of Manchester, *The Teaching Church,* p. 148. Used by permission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London.

All we can do here is to indicate what might be done, trusting the reader to understand how best to use the suggestions and guide the process.

*a. Someone must take the initiative.* No one can better do this than the minister. In children's work or young people's work we can to a degree at least "go round" the pastor. That cannot be done in adult work. Here we are cutting into his field of interest and activity. Therefore we say that he should take the initiative. If he does not do so, the door is not absolutely closed. Some concerned and tactful man or woman may have to start, but not without counseling with the pastor and enlisting his interest and co-operation if possible. If plans are to be successful, they cannot be so without at least his co-operation. It will be better if he takes the lead himself.

*b. The persons primarily affected should be enlisted to study the matter together.* At a conference or, better still, a series of conferences several things should be done by the group:

(1) Prepare a chart of all the organizations and agencies operating in the adult field, together with their emphases, their purposes. Use the plan described earlier in this chapter as a basis.[10]

(2) Discuss the relationship of each agency to the church and to the other ongoing phases of the adult program.

An alternative procedure would be to ask the leader or representative of each organization or agency to bring in definite statements, preferably in written form or even mimeographed so that every person might have a copy for study, which answer the following questions:

(*a*) What are the definite things (objectives) ———— seeks to accomplish in the lives of adults?

(*b*) What activities (worship, study, service, fellowship, et cetera) are suggested for the accomplishment of the objectives mentioned above?

(*c*) How is ———— related to the other ongoing phases of the church's adult program?

[10] See pp. 128, 129.

(*d*) In what ways is _____ related to the activities and programs of the other two age groups?

Plenty of time should be taken for the presentation and discussion of these items. It would be well if an afternoon and evening could be given to this enterprise alone. The presentation and discussion should not do more than uncover the facts in the case.

(3) Set down the definite objectives of the *total adult program,* the purposes to be accomplished in the lives of men and women. Use Chapter II in this connection.

(4) Decide what program elements or types of activities should be provided to achieve these objectives. This should be done without regard to the agencies provided to afford these opportunities.

(5) Formulate the simplest possible setup necessary to help all the adults of the church to participate in these activities without duplication and overlapping.

At several points along this road there is possibility of trouble, especially if any of these leaders are jealous for their particular organization. Success will depend upon the wisdom, tact, and good judgment of the leader and the ability and willingness of the group to think and act in terms of a total adult program. Hold before them the necessity of keeping Christian personality in the forefront and organization and agencies in the background.

Of one thing we are certain. The church must move as rapidly as possible from *a lot of fragmentary programs* in the direction of *one inclusive and comprehensive adult program.* Such a program will:

(*a*) Meet all the religious needs of adults.
(*b*) Lead them into an increasingly significant Christian life and experience.
(*c*) Help them into an intelligent understanding of and participation in the Kingdom enterprise in their own homes, in the church, the community, the nation, and the world.

## Chapter IX

# SOME FORWARD STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

### 1. Unifying the Women's Work of the Church.

One of the best illustrations of a forward step in the right direction toward unifying the work of the church is what is happening in women's work. In most churches, even in small ones, there have been, or are, at least two women's organizations, a Missionary Society and a Ladies' Aid. Many churches will have other women's organizations also.

In a surprising and encouraging way these different organizations are being displaced by a single organization, a Women's Association or Women's Society, which includes all the church women and carries forward in its program all that was formerly done by these separate organizations and a lot of things none of them ever tried to do. In some cases we find a "federation," in which the older groupings maintain their identity but unite in the larger program, but more and more churches are going the whole way in the unification of the women's work of the church.

While the work of the women in the church is not the only place which needs unifying, what is being done here bears so vitally on this whole problem of organization that we should examine it. The movement among church women is a "lead" to what may be accomplished elsewhere throughout the church. The same principles apply in general in setting up the church activities of the men.

Let us therefore look at some actual cases to see how the plan for a unified program for church women works out, and some of the problems it helps to solve.

*Case 1.* A small country church had four different women's organizations: a Missionary Society, made up largely of older women; an Aid; a Guild; and a Service League. The majority of the

women of the congregation were not identified with any of these four groups, and refused to join, even though pressure had been brought to bear to that end. "How can we interest these women, who are, most of them, the younger women of the church? They need the church and could make a large contribution to its life and work."

The discussion leader did not get a chance to answer the query. Some women from a neighboring church spoke up saying, "We had that very situation in our church but now we have practically every woman actively identified with our women's work."

"How did you do it?"

"By eliminating all these different societies, each of them carrying a partial program, and having instead one inclusive Women's Association, in which the women unite in a single working group. Women who wouldn't join the Guild or the Missionary Society or the Aid responded to the idea of the work of the church which women can do. The *work of the church* was big enough to pull them all into the picture. Besides, whereas we always had a hard time before in trying to get enough women to be officers of all our societies, we now have relatively little trouble getting leaders for our work."

One of the perils in the older situation was that of interesting women in a part of the program of the church rather than the whole program. We have had little groups — some interested in missions, some in local support, some in social life, et cetera. The nature of the setup tended to narrow rather than broaden the interests and the co-operation of women. If missions is isolated in a relatively small Missionary Society, it will not be likely to be seen as the work of the whole church.

"What will happen to missions?" is one of the questions most frequently asked when presenting the newer idea of Women's Work. Therefore, let us look at

*Case 2.* In a metropolitan church there were many women's groups, each one intent on its special program or interest. No women were being reached with the whole program of the church.

Many were not touched at all. A committee was appointed to study and make recommendations for forward steps. It was found that these various small groups were supporting a score of different benevolences, including the missionary work of the denomination. Some of them were having a hard time raising the money needed by their particular pet benevolence. After careful study, a federation of the present societies was proposed, but turned down. Groups were jealous of their independence and feared that the new plan would cause them to lose something. The committee was continued and eventually, to make a long story short, the plan of a Women's Association was proposed and adopted.

The missionary women held out the longest and the hardest. They feared for "the missionary apportionment." In the constitution adopted it was stated that if there should ever happen to be a shortage of benevolent money when the time came to "pay the apportionment," money should be taken from the general fund to make up the difference. All the women in the church were asked to pledge to local enterprises and to benevolences. The result was plenty to pay the apportionment, and all the other worthy interests of the combined groups. The general fund never had to be called upon. More women pledging for missions meant more missionary money.

Another thing happened. Interest in missions increased. Half the general monthly meetings and many of the circle meetings were missionary in nature. Women who had never heard of missions received missionary education and shared through the work of the association in the missionary enterprises of the local church and the denomination. Instead of being divided into little groups wrapped up in particular enterprises, all the church women were in touch with all of them.

One woman, who under the old plan had not been interested in missions but was interested in community enterprises, was invited to "come to the bridge luncheon at my home on Thursday to meet our relatives from Washington, D. C." Her reply was, "I'm sorry, but that is the afternoon of our women's meeting and

it's a missionary meeting and I wouldn't miss it for the world." Something had happened in that woman's life which would not likely have occurred under the old order.

Just how does this plan operate? [1] All that we can do here is to sketch in a few lines through using the case following.

*Case 3.* We are in a church in a city west of the Missouri River. There are some four hundred women in that church, all members of the association. The whole large group is divided for more effective functioning into circles of from twenty-five to thirty women. The circle is not another organization; it is rather a way of breaking up a large women's group into working units. Each one carries its share of the total program. Some, in addition, carry on special projects in which they are interested. These circles are reconstituted every year, the women looking forward to work in the new groupings where they meet different women. All the women in the church are assigned to circles. One function of the circle is to contact the women who are "lukewarm," with a view to leading them into active participation. In forming the circles, the relatively few "lukewarm" members are distributed among the different circle groups. Should a circle give a woman up, the next year a new group will be working on her and may succeed with her.

There is a general meeting of the association each month. The programs for these meetings are proposed by the executive committee, functioning through a program committee. They are adopted by the association. Procedure is democratic. The executive committee is made up of the officers of the association plus the leaders of each circle.

The circles also meet monthly. The programs for all circles are proposed by the program committee, but must be adopted by the circle before they are in force. In addition to the common general plans, made through the program committee, each circle has a wide range of activities of its own choosing along lines of special

[1] Write to your denominational headquarters for full information. Compare Educational Bulletin 402, *Adults in Action.* (See Bibliography.)

interest and concern. These " specials," however, do not interfere with the common enterprise, which is the ongoing work of the church. They are rather supplementary and additional. The particular time of meeting is determined by the circle itself. There are some evening meetings, especially where professional and business women are involved. Every effort is made to meet the time schedule of the groups as well as may be done.

A word of caution is in order. Be sure, at the very beginning, to provide for the annual reconstitution of the circle membership. Lead the women to look forward to the new contacts in the new groupings. Emphasize the fact that the important thing is the work of the church. The circle is simply a convenient device to get the work of the church done more effectively.

*Case 4.* This church is east of the Missouri. The circles are permanent. The leaders say, " You can't do things in the East the way they do in the West. It might work there but it won't here." This remark is evidence that the very thing which should be prevented has already happened. The circles have become ends in themselves rather than convenient means to doing the work of the church more expeditiously. They are, in fact, already separate organizations, each with its characteristic and peculiar identity.

A woman united with this particular church. Circle " A " urged her to " join our circle. We have the finest group of women in the church. If you'll only join our circle we know you will like it." Circles " G " and " K " and others went after her with the same appeal. Each circle had become an organization, quite conscious of itself and concerned with building *itself* up. The outcome in this church, unless the leaders are very wise indeed, may be as many different women's organizations as there are now circles. This will likely be a more complicated situation than existed before the association was formed.

Suppose this woman had joined the church reported in Case 3. She would have been approached by the membership committee and invited to identify herself with the association. They would

have explained the circle plan, and how the circles were convenient means to the end of the work of the church. They would likely have said: "We usually assign people to circles; in fact, we do that very thing each year when we reconstitute the circle memberships. It happens, however, that there are now four circles whose membership is not full. You may join whichever one of these you choose." Thus, while there would have been assignment, there would also have been some degree of choice for the new member.

But how shall we go about instituting the association? Let us look at

*Case 5.* A large church had a multiplicity of organized women's groups, most of them centering in some missionary objective. After four years of careful and tactful leadership they had come to the point of preparing and adopting a constitution as an inclusive society. The writer met with four hundred women. Not one of them was talking about "giving up" anything. All were concerned about "taking on something more" and discovering the best way in which all the women of that great church might share more effectively in its total work. When it came to the matter of budget for the new organization, they totaled up the budgets of all the former groups and added ten per cent for good measure.

Such an attitude as this is heartening indeed. As never before, we are finding the women of the church in the whole work of the church. What is being done here needs to be done all along the line, not only in adult work, but throughout the whole church.

### 2. A Unified Plan for the Church Work of Men.

Church work for men cannot be handled as is that of the women. The time schedule and men's responsibilities make that manifestly impossible. What can be done to marshal men in the work of the church?

First of all, let us make clear what we mean by men's work. We are not thinking of an organization, a brotherhood, but rather of the ways in which men may share in church life and relate

themselves to the things there are for men to do in it. If church men are doing the work of the church, that should be men's work enough to satisfy anybody. Men's work means men at work. How shall we enlist men actively in those church activities through which they may grow? How shall we help them to find in and through the church an outlet for their Christian service? How can we relate them to community and world tasks?

It is our conviction that all these purposes *might* be accomplished without any definite organization, beyond an active and aggressive and alert committee which would be all the time at the job of relating men to the various church activities in which they may participate as men, or together with women as a part of the adult program. If this is being done, and if in addition the men of the parish are brought together from time to time for general meetings for fellowship and inspiration, what need is there for "an organization"? In operating this plan the committee must see to it that all the needs are being met, and that the participation is so general in the varied activities that there will be well-balanced growth.[2]

Most church leaders, however, feel that there is a real advantage in uniting the men of the church in some sort of definite organization to which they may consciously belong. Such a Men's Fellowship or Brotherhood would include all the men of the church, just as the Women's Association includes all the women. There should be *at least* three or four meetings a year of all these men. One might be a "Father and Son" affair. Some churches plan more frequent gatherings of men, but three ought to be *possible* in almost any church. The church should not complicate the situation men face by planning too many meetings at which large companies are expected. On the other hand, men must someday decide what things are so important that they cannot be left out without great loss, and support these things.

When we have arranged and successfully carried on such meetings as are proposed, let us not think that just because we have

[2] For guidance, consult the list of activities suggested in the chart on p. 129.

had our men together for fellowship and inspiration this is men's work. All they have done is to eat together and to enjoy a good program. That is hardly church work for men. To be sure, what they did there may have a vital relation to the work of the church which men can do and should do. Men's meetings should be the inspiration for men's work, but they are not a substitute for it.

A group of men in a Western church were discussing their men's work. They reported ten meetings a year, starting in October with a fine attendance and gradually petering out as the spring and summer came on. They decided that they were having too many meetings for men as busy as they were, and that four meetings a year, one a Father and Son affair, would be enough. At these gatherings they would really endeavor to secure the attendance of all the men of the congregation. It was perfectly clear to them that the men's work of the church was not simply partaking of a good dinner. They were eager to find how to relate the men vitally in definite church activities.

Plans were made to arrange a number of committees or commissions, each dealing with one phase of church work. There was one on publicity — not publicity for the men's organization, but church publicity. The social committee was to co-operate with a similar one from the Women's Association in planning for joint social activities for all the adults of the church as well as operating in the men's area. The worship committee and the study committee were to relate men to these church activities wherever found; the one on family life to co-operate with one from the women's group in promoting religion in the home and sponsoring parent education and other family affairs. The membership committee set itself to enlist members for the church, not for the Men's Fellowship alone. There were committees on ushering, community life, world relations, the every member canvass, et cetera. The evangelistic committee was a personal workers' group, called, sometimes, the invitation committee. Every man in the church was assigned to a particular committee. Some of these men

might not be very active, but one function of the committee was to try to get them actively enlisted.

Men's work would be done at the level of these committees or commissions. They might meet once a month or every six weeks or as frequently as necessary to carry on their work. In and through them the men of the church would be doing the work of the church. (In a large church the functions of these committees might be divided up, Publicity I taking charge of newspaper publicity, and Publicity II doing poster work and special advertising. Thus every man would be charged with a special job.) So that the men would not go stale on one task, it was decided to have these assignments last six months and then to plan a realignment of committees, shuffling the men around into new tasks.

The group mentioned above decided that the executive committee, composed of the officers of the Fellowship together with the committee chairmen, would have breakfast together once a month to hear reports from committees and to feed suggestions down to them. A report from each committee would be made at some time during the year at the quarterly meetings of the Fellowship, part of the committees reporting at each meeting. Thus all the men could be in touch with all that was being done in their name.

While the arrangements in any particular situation will depend upon that situation, the general principles behind such a plan as we have reported above are evident. Each church will decide what committees are needed and just how they will be formed in such a way as to enlist the men in the work of the church. The sort of plan outlined is working in many churches, where it does for the men what the Women's Association does for the women, although in a little different way. Full provision should be made for special projects to be undertaken from time to time. These should be carried as additional enterprises. Such a project might be taking over one Sunday evening service a month for the three summer months; Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets in cooperation with the women of the church would be another.[3]

[3] Write to your denominational headquarters for special plans for men's work in your church.

### 3. Caring for the Needs of Young Adults.

In some churches the programs of the agencies listed in the chart on p. 129 will be so varied and adequate as to care for the needs of young adults. In other cases there may seem to be need for special organizational provision for this group, especially for the young married people. Such needs may be met by the kind of young adult activities that will be described in this section. However, where it is possible to do so, such special provision should be supplementary and in addition to participation in the women's work and the men's work of the church program. This group, with its great energy and its special desire for fellowship with others who are undergoing similar experiences, will, in many instances at least, be glad to carry these as " plus " activities, in no way interfering with their functioning as men and women of the church. Then, when they are farther along, and have assumed the full responsibilities of adulthood, they will find their places and the outlet for their energies in the Women's Association, the Men's Fellowship, and the other phases of the church program provided for their co-operation.

But in most churches something needs to be done about the young adult situation immediately. Fortunately we have available comparatively recent studies to guide our thinking and planning, as well as the continuing work of denominational and interdenominational agencies that are concerned with the possibilities of organizing the young adults for effective Christian work.

In a study made in 1934, Miss A. D. Bischoff [4] reported that in 96 selected churches, scattered over 12 states, only 28 young adult groups could be found. Of this number, only 9 were composed of young married people. In three automobile trips across the continent, using different routes each time, by stops along the road and by correspondence Dr. George Gleason was able to locate only 62 young married groups outside the State of California.

[4] A. D. Bischoff, *Case Studies of Young Adult Groups Organized for Religious Education*, p. 7. Thesis in Library of Presbyterian College of Christian Education, Chicago, 1934.

One denominational director of Adult Work is reported to have said, "I do not know a single group in our denomination of the type you mention."

Dr. Gleason in 1937 made an intensive study of 222 young married people's groups in 173 churches in Southern California.[5] Of 400 churches questioned, 227 reported no groups. It was found that in many cases these groups started spontaneously, without any initiation on the part of the church. Many churches assumed that they had such groups but did not have them at all. Upon investigation they were not found in the Adult Department. "They are with the young people," was the usual answer. But when that department was visited, they were not there either. The study revealed that these young married folks did not fit in well with young people of their own age who were unmarried. Neither did they mix happily with the older married adults. In most of the churches investigated they were either by themselves or as a group they did not exist.

This study substantiates what has been said previously about the necessity of grouping adults according to interest and on a functional basis. Dr. Gleason's findings are in line with those of an earlier study made in a local church by Mrs. Jessie A. Charters.[6] These writers confirm observation and experience that if the young adult group is the "lost generation," it is lost because the church has failed to make provision in its program to meet the needs of that particular group.

These young adults provide us with two problems. Some leaders say, "They grow up but won't get out of the Young People's Department." If they stay there, they constitute a problem for the church. Others say: "They do get out but don't go into the Adult Department; they just fall out and don't ever come back again." In this case is not the church responsible?

The interests, the outlook, the needs of young adults are specific and crucial, especially if they are newly married and having their

[5] George Gleason, *Church Group Activities for Young Married People.*
[6] Jessie A. Charters, *Young Adults in the Church.*

first babies. No special provision in the adult program to meet these particular needs will likely result in losing the group. How heartening that an increasing number of churches are finding the way through aggressive planning and action to save these people!

In some cases the Sunday School has strong young adult classes, many of them with programs which go far beyond the Sunday morning session. "Learning for Life," with its special interest courses, offers a great possibility for this group.

Some churches have young adult society groups, which meet on Sunday night and follow study courses and discussion topics especially chosen with the needs of the group in mind. The writer knows one such group which was as active and aggressive in the church as some of its members were in their community clubs.

In other cases we find Schooner or Clipper Clubs, Kouples Klubs, Twenty-Thirty Clubs, and the like.[7] These are week-night activities, some of them including Sunday morning or evening classes and discussion groups as well as varied social, recreational, and service programs.

One initial problem is to discover when a person becomes a young adult. Age is a very unsatisfactory basis for determining this. Other considerations push age into the background. In attempting to get at this problem the International Council of Religious Education, through its Youth and Adult committees, has prepared a leaflet to assist youth in making the transition.[8] Among criteria proposed are:

(1) Completion of formal education.
(2) Leaving the paternal home.
(3) Getting married.
(4) Becoming economically independent.
(5) Beginning to work in one's chosen profession.
(6) Attaining citizenship age.

[7] This whole matter, with reports of how churches are meeting the situation, is dealt with at length in the Educational Bulletin 415, *Young Adults in the Church.* International Council of Religious Education.

[8] *Youth to Adulthood,* International Council of Religious Education.

Another puzzling problem is that of graduating these young adults when they are no longer young. Some churches have an age limit, when a couple has figuratively to " walk the plank " and get out of the young adult group into the men's and women's groups in the church. Some promote the group and form a new group of the oncoming young people, thus eventually having a series of married couples' groups spanning the whole adult age range and centering the adult program in this kind of organizational plan. This creates a problem with those who happen to be unmarried.

Of course the church which does its work on a functional rather than an organizational basis has a great advantage in solving such problems as these that we have been discussing. However it may be worked out in a particular case, everyone will readily recognize the need of adequate program provision for this important group.

### 4. Making More of the Home or Extension Program of the Church.

We would include here far more than is ordinarily understood by the Home Department of the Sunday School. The modern extension program reaches out helpfully to all the nonattending constituency of the church. It is the extension of the ongoing program to those who are prevented by one reason or another from attendance upon the normal run of church activities. It applies to children, to young people, and to adults. It includes all extramural activities under the auspices of the church. It will be cooperatively sponsored by all the church agencies working together.

In discussing this matter The International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, *The Christian Education of Adults,* lists the various situations and experiences which keep people from active participation and create a need for extramural activities. There are:

(1) Those physically unable to attend through accident or temporary or permanent illness.
(2) Those prevented from attending because of employment or home duties.

(3) Those who lack interest in religion or are irreligious or simply yield to the attractions of rival interests.
(4) The inaccessible through distance or lack of transportation facilities.

To reach such persons helpfully the church must extend its program and its service, seeking and finding ways of enlisting these nonattending persons in worth-while activities through which they may grow spiritually. Among these efforts will be included such things as reading and study, personal counseling, calling by the pastor or other church representative, guidance in radio programs which have particular contributions to make. Every effort will be made to relate these nonattending people to the activities and life of the attending groups so that they may feel themselves a vital part of the church program. In some churches, for instance, there are home members of various classes in the Church School and their particular classes are in constant touch with them.[9]

### 5. Making and Maintaining Christian Homes.[10]

This type of supplementary activity has to do with special contacts with prospective and present homemakers, with a view to making and maintaining Christian homes. Every agency of the church will be aware of the need for special efforts at this point. Not only is the home one area in which adults are to live effective Christian lives; it is at the same time the basic educational institution for every member of the family. The quality of life in the home rests primarily upon the adult members. If the home is to be Christian, the responsibility for making it so does not belong to the youngsters but to the oldsters.

General help and inspiration along these lines will be afforded in the regular ongoing phases of the adult program, but these must be supplemented by special and specific help, which is needed and which the church can render. In connection with the study and

[9] See The International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, pp. 139–148.

[10] See the International Council of Religious Education Bulletin 425, *Christian Family Life Education.*

discussion opportunities, special provision may be made for courses in preparation for marriage. Ministers are increasingly counseling those whom they are about to marry, some going so far as to refuse to marry a couple without at least an hour of unhurried conference sometime before the marriage takes place. Much needs to be done to redeem the wedding occasion from pagan and crude and unwholesome practices. The whole social situation surrounding marriage needs to be changed and only the church can change it. Well does Regina Westcott Wieman put the situation:

"Our young people enter the marriage relationship with many illusions, delusions, and confusions regarding marriage and home-building. Society throws up a showy screen composed of wedding bells and bouquets, showers, smart doings, and other superficial externalities which keep the minds of the young people diverted from the real issues involved. After a few artificial conventional gestures, the average couple enter the most difficult of human relationships. No one seems disturbed over their ignorance concerning the requirements and significance of their new life. Many parents will spend from fifty to five thousand dollars on the wedding fete, but not one penny on appropriate education for marriage. The fact that the couple love each other is supposed to provide sufficient equipment and technique to insure success. Their early experiences in adjustment more times than not are marked by unnecessary difficulty, misunderstanding, and suffering. Most counselors assert that the experiences of the first few months of married life tend to condition all the years that follow." [11]

In a group of young married people it was said, "When our minister preaches on the importance of making our homes Christian, we really want to do it but nobody has taken the time to show us what is involved and how to go about doing it." The church can show such seekers for help how to do this very thing. Here is a fruitful field to be cultivated by personal counseling, group conferences, classes, and the distributing of well-selected literature. A library may be built up for circulation. The church

[11] *The Modern Family and the Church,* p. 34. Used by permission of Harper & Brothers.

staff may be supplemented by medical and other professional services working in close co-operation with it.

Certainly the church cannot cry out against the evils of divorce and against the other forces which are disintegrating to home and family life until it has really exerted itself to prevent homes from going on the rocks and shoals which cause marital shipwreck. The best defense of the home is an aggressive counterattack — an attack which will not be made unless the church makes it.

### 6. More and Better Provision for Parent Education.[12]

No other agency than the church is likely to help parents to appreciate the opportunity and discharge the responsibilities of Christian parenthood. The church and the family are founded upon fellowship fostered by love. Both of them have a vital concern for the development of the immature into more significant maturity.

One pastor invited the parents of little children under six to meet him for a series of discussions. The invitation said: "You are not implored or urged to come, but you are invited. Answer on the enclosed card whether one or both of you will be present. The group is limited in number and if you can't attend someone else will be invited in your place." More fathers attended than mothers! The first meeting was early in December. They discussed, "What shall I tell my little child under six about Santa Claus?" Decision was made at the close of each evening as to the problem for the next week. Use of the Bible, discipline problems, prayer, and other matters were faced frankly and with profit. The minister simply "set" the problem. Then the questions, problems, and experiences came pouring in. The hour was all too short. Later, this same pastor discussed with parents the problems of adolescents. Needless to say, parenthood became more thrilling and more satisfying and successful in and through that church.

Parents have a right to expect help from their church, first, that

[12] See Educational Bulletin 423, *Home and Church Work Together.* International Council of Religious Education.

they may themselves be the kind of persons who are worthy and capable and efficient in their parental roles, and secondly, that they may meet successfully the different perplexing parent-child situations which they face. They also need to be kept in close touch with the church to know what is being done with their children and how the home and church can co-operate in the common enterprise of providing for the growth and development of childhood and youth.

### 7. Developing Church Leaders.

Everything the church does to promote religious development in the individual should result in fitting that person to exert his influence as a positive help to others. Every person who has an influence over the life of another is to the extent of that influence a " teacher " from whom someone may learn. Every person touches others, in his family, church, community, and other groupings. The leader of adults will be on the alert to encourage the disposition and ability to make such contacts positive contributions for good, for helping others to grow. Furthermore, no person will himself grow to the fullest Christian stature unless he is constantly pouring his life into the lives of others.

Not only will the adult program be concerned with these more informal types of leadership influence; it will also be directed to the end of leading to definite consecration of personality and time and talent in manning the volunteer leadership staff of the church and of the community also, as far as it can do so. Adults should expect to provide the leaders in every sort of situation. The adult program therefore has a twofold aim at this point: To help people to have something really worth sharing with others, and to help them to find their highest joy in sharing what they have.

Beyond this, the program will be instrumental in encouraging adults to avail themselves of those specific leadership education opportunities which are needed if leaders are to be efficient. It is the recognition of this fact that has led to making Leadership Education a prominent supplement of the " ' Learning for Life ' Plan of

Guided Adult Study." Many adults should go into these specialized opportunities for training for specific and particular tasks in the church's volunteer staff. If they are already in the leaders' group they will be availing themselves of every possible chance for developing skills and techniques as well as personal spiritual qualifications so necessary in effective leadership.

### 8. Developing Effective Followers and Co-operators.

A successful program demands more than leaders. There must be followers — persons who have the disposition and the ability to co-operate with leaders and with others in the achievement of desired goals. Leaders will not go far without intelligent people to support them. How successful have we been in developing the kind of person who understands and appreciates good leadership and co-operates with it in carrying forward the purposes of the church and of the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom comes by growth. The church is above all else a fellowship of learners who are striving together in a common cause. There are a few leaders; there must be many happy and discriminating followers who are intelligent enough to know what that cause is, and to make, each one, his contribution to it.

### 9. Spiritual Life or Fellowship Groups.

In every church there are a few people who would like to take Jesus Christ more earnestly and who welcome the opportunity to meet with a small group of like-minded persons to study the matter and discuss it together. In many cases they will use a textbook. Their purpose will be to dig more deeply into the things of Christian faith and life than is possible to do in the average adult Bible class. These will be temporary groupings meeting for study and prayer for a season. The same group might spend several weeks together, meeting once a week, and then disband for the balance of the year, forming again for the next year. The freer the situation can be kept the better. The group should be small, that there may be the freest exchange of experiences and

ideas. It should be very homogeneous and intimate. The best leadership in the church should be used for this important enterprise. There may be groups for men and for women, or there may well be mixed groups. The meeting schedule will have a good deal to do with the complexion of a particular group.

### 10. The United Christian Adult Movement.

One of the significant supports of the local church program of adult work is the United Christian Adult Movement, in which tens of thousands of adults are pledging themselves to live here and now as though the Kingdom of God were already established. This is not a new organization; it sets up no machinery in the local church. It is a spirit which infuses adults with a new passion and a new zeal as they undertake to carry on their enterprises of worship, study, and action. It unites the men and women of North America in a common forward movement in these three areas of activity.[13] Consequently it may be the means of putting new life into the ongoing adult program and may be laid hold upon by the leader of adults as a means of undergirding his work and providing inspiring materials and suggestions for a great common forward movement through the church.

[13] Write to the International Council of Religious Education, or your own denomination, for leaflet and other materials describing this movement. Consult the *Adult Program Guide of the United Christian Adult Movement.*

## Chapter X

# LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH'S ADULT PROGRAM

### 1. The Importance of Leadership.

The quality and effectiveness of the church's program will never rise above the level of the capacity, the intelligence, the resourcefulness, the skill, and the consecration of its leadership.

Here is the heart of effective Christian education. Better teaching and learning conditions, better materials, improved methods, are all simply tools for the use of the workers. The tools cannot guarantee results apart from devoted and efficient leaders, but the right kind of leaders, eager for improvement and growth, can and will in time provide the conditions that make possible a program which will be vital in leading people into a rich and full Christian life and experience.

While the degree of success of any school or educational agency depends upon its leaders, this is especially true in light of the purpose and program of the church. It is one thing to attempt to develop in others manual or intellectual skills or to impart the cultural heritage of the race. It is quite another to become the instrument, under the guidance of God, for the communication of the Christian experience. Here the leader's own life and personality overshadows all the other factors and is the primary qualification. Not lessons, nor textbooks, nor programs, but Christian personality begets Christian personality.

### 2. Some Qualifications for Effective Leadership.

In the Christian education of younger groups the leader has the inevitable prestige of a mature person dealing with those who are immature and recognize the fact. In working with adults, the leader is dealing with a group whose members are, at least in most respects, equally mature with himself.

This requires that the successful leader of adults must either be recognized by his group as a person of outstanding spiritual personality and ability or he must be capable of so identifying himself with them that he and they together become discoverers and adventurers in spiritual achievement. In either case this means leadership of a high order indeed. If incompetence is not to be tolerated in leaders of children and young people, it is less likely to be overlooked in the worker with adults. Men and women demand strong leadership and skilled guidance. The adult job is far more exacting, and in some ways more difficult, than any other in the church. What are some of the qualifications and requirements?

*a.* The most helpful leader, and the most successful one, will *identify himself with the learning group.* He, with them, must enter into the deep experiences of Christian living. They are to enter upon a common quest. This identification is more easily achieved by the adult leader than by those who work with children, for he is to a larger degree on an equality with his group.

*b.* The leader must *know how to share his experiences with others* and *how to lead them to share with each other* their experiences in Christian living. Thus, it does not all depend upon the experience of the leader. He helps people to help one another while he acts as a kind of balance wheel in the learning process. After all, the most auspicious learning situation, as we have pointed out elsewhere, is one where the leader and the learners unite in a common search, a common undertaking through which they together achieve higher levels of living.

*c.* A leader of adults must himself *enter deeply and wholeheartedly into those experiences through which Christian personality grows.* Experiences of private and public worship; of knowledge of the Bible; of fellowship with God and with men; of worthy service in the name and spirit of Christ; of applying the principles of the gospel in the whole realm of personal and social relationships must be a part of his life. He is not likely to lead members of his group farther than he himself goes. The leader

cannot share what he does not have in his own life. He must live what he teaches and teach through his life.

*d.* He who would lead adults must *be dominated by a mighty purpose and a great consecration to be the means through which others may enter increasingly into genuine Christian discipleship and fruitful Christian life and experience.* Not only must the leader have this purpose himself, this overmastering vision of a worthy end, but he must hold it before those who follow him, and have the capacity to make them love and desire it too. The motive of all action, after all, lies in desire. We move out in worthy service and toward a more complete and vital Christian life in so far as we have learned to love it and desire it for ourselves.

*e.* A leader of men and women must be *possessed of a love for those whom he leads* which will make him infinitely patient in dealing with their inertia and failures, and yet undiscourageable in his persistent purpose that they shall enter into larger experiences of Christian living.

*f.* An adult leader must be *equipped for his work by specific training.* This includes practical knowledge of the interests, characteristics, needs, and activities of adults, and knowledge and mastery of the resources of both the materials and the methods of guidance. In case these resources are not available in the leader's own experience, he must know where to find them elsewhere and how to use them. Thus, out of his own experience and that of the race, and particularly from the Bible, he will marshal the means of stimulating, developing, and enriching Christian lives. Happy is that leader of adults whose background of knowledge, insight, experience, and skill surpasses that of those whom he would lead. Lacking this, he may still succeed. On the one hand, he may be skilled in discovering resources outside himself to lay hold upon. On the other hand, he may help the members of his group to share with each other such resources as are resident within them; in this way each helps the other to grow. Above everything else, the leader should have a knowledge and understanding of the Christian message and program.

*g.* The adult leader *must himself be a learner.* He is neither an interlocutor nor a cross-examiner; he does not sit in judgment. With his group he approaches the sources of Christian life and of Christian knowledge, and kneels with them to drink from the eternal springs. It is his function to unlock the doors of the riches of the past experience of the race and of the learners themselves, that it may be useful in enriching and controlling present experience. The essence of true leadership is co-operation. While he will draw out and develop every ounce of his capacity on behalf of those whom he leads, he is not aiming at a passive receptivity but is endeavoring to stimulate the most complete and satisfying activity on the part of his followers. Yet he is one with his group in an advance which they are making together.

*h.* In cases where actual enterprises of social reconstruction are undertaken, such as dealing effectively in local communities with the liquor problem, the leader *must be so well poised in judgment, so sound in his grasp of scientific methods of gathering and using facts, so well respected in his community that its forces for civic righteousness will be ready and willing to follow him.*

*i.* The leader of adults must above everything else *have the ability and disposition to get his learners to think for themselves and to stand on their own feet.* Of all people, he should be the first to rejoice at the degree in which he has succeeded in making his followers independent of his guidance. He is the occasion of their growth. He does not do their growing for them, nor does he expect to keep his learners in the attitude of dependence upon him and his leading. Self-abnegation is a prime qualification of the good leader.

Let us sum the whole matter up in the words of Dr. Basil A. Yeaxlee, a noted leader in Adult Education in England:

"To describe the ideal tutor is not easy, and any sketch, even from the life, might be misleading. For he or she is heaven-sent, and unconscious of the fact. They must be prophets prepared to work at their job; interpreters, at once of the truth and of the men whom they are to inspire with love of it; pioneers, ever ex-

ploring the uncharted seas of knowledge and thought for themselves, and seeking to understand the men and women whom they lead in that tremendous adventure; unsentimental lovers of their kind, people with a passion the more powerful because it is restrained. In them the power of response to individual people must ever be uppermost, and yet they must not lose their hold on ordered knowledge and dispassionate judgment. They must be able to arrest, inspire, and lead others by reason of their own mental and spiritual quality, and yet remain humble, simple, direct, and practical, with the courage and patience to wait while their students take months to find out for themselves what they could be told in five minutes, and learn slowly to think for themselves — perchance on levels far lower than that to which they would willingly be lifted by their teacher's thought. And, lest too intense a type be suggested by these words, let us add that without the salt of humor no tutor will make much of his vocation." [1]

### 3. How Can We Measure Up to Such a High Standard?

Said a leader of adults in whose presence some of the above qualifications of leadership had been discussed, " You make me feel like quitting my job! " Then there was a laugh and a lift of the head and a new set of the jaw and the remark, " But I'm not."

Every one of us knows just how that leader felt and what the remark meant. None of us measures up to the ideal, and certainly we do not expect to do so in all respects. But a look at what we desire to be should not discourage us. It should rather make us grit our teeth and redouble our determination and our effort to come as near the ideal as we can and to remember that infinite possibilities of growth are open to us all, leaders included.

How we respond to the picture presented indicates our worthiness or otherwise. The leader is not one who has arrived. He is a person who is definitely on the way, perhaps a step ahead of those he is leading, but nonetheless looking forward with eagerness and with joy to the possibilities of his own growth. Only a

[1] Basil A. Yeaxlee, *Lifelong Education,* p. 135. Used by permission of Cassell & Co., London.

person who is growing himself can stimulate others to grow. Of all people the leader of adults should be striving to attain "unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." [2]

### 4. Who Are the Leaders in the Adult Program and What Contributions Are We to Expect from Them?

As we survey the situation in even the average church and community, it is a bit surprising to see what resources of leadership are available for use in the varied phases of a well-rounded adult program:

*a. There is the pastor, and in many cases the employed staff of the church.* We have elsewhere pointed out the fact that the pastor spends a major portion of his time in direct contact with and in leadership of adults. He *has to* if he is going to keep the church functioning. Consider the phases of church work which depend upon him directly, and note how important a leader in adult Christian education the minister is.[3]

It is possible to conceive of the whole work of the church as an educational enterprise. The program of Christian education begins in the home under the guidance and supervision of the parents, who are adults; it continues through the years of babyhood, childhood, and youth, almost wholly administered by adults; it goes on into manhood and womanhood, stimulating, guiding, inspiring, and molding personality into Christlikeness. His primary place and concern in such a program is something no pastor dares *turn over* to anyone else. The improvement of this total teaching-learning process is the minister's chief concern. The way he enters most effectively into the whole process is by dealing with the leadership of the program just outlined: in contacts with homes as the adviser of parents; in the guidance of church officers' groups; in training his leaders; on those occasions when through teaching, preaching, worship, or other ways, he becomes a source of en-

[2] Eph. 4:13.

[3] See the discussion beginning on p. 105.

couragement and of inspiration to his staff. In dealing with his workers, he is dealing with adults. He is helping them to grow, that they in turn may be the kind of persons who are capable and eager in helping others, young or old, to grow also. If we are to have a teaching church, the pastor is at the helm and his contribution is the largest in becoming the inspirer of adults in their various leadership roles. He should go even beyond his leadership group, for he must create such an attitude, such a spiritual climate, in the personalities of the whole adult church constituency that the spiritual life may thrive and find those conditions which make for vigorous and virile growth.

All this does not mean that the minister is to become a schoolmaster or to "take on another job." It does mean that he is to conceive of the job he already has in educational terms and deliberately plan his work as a spiritual engineer, who, facing spiritual needs and understanding the nature and function of religion, organizes the resources which may meet those needs in such significant ways as will result in the achievement of Christian personality in the individual and in the creation of a Christian social order.

Besides the pastor, the director of religious education is an actual or potential leader in the adult field, along with other areas of the educational work. As we are coming to look at the whole work of the church as having educational significance, the director will more and more function in the oversight of all phases of the total program. Large contributions may be made in guiding and counseling with the leaders of various adult activities as the pastor and director co-operate to the end that the whole church may become a fellowship — a community of learning.

Where there is such a staff person as a parish visitor, that worker will be making a large contribution to the growth of adults. The same may be true of other employed staff workers.

*b. There are the church officers, and official church groups.* These leaders are concerned with adults, along with other ages. They will, as those officially charged with the oversight of the

whole program, have special concern for such matters as the proper correlation and relationship of the various adult organizations and activities. While the official church bodies are frequently *concerned* with children and young people, they are themselves *composed* of adults and must be dealt with accordingly. Not only so, but as adults they may be helped to grow in their official capacities and in their official group meetings.[4] Besides, many of them will be found among the aggressive leaders of the adult program quite apart from these official relationships and responsibilities.

*c. There are the administrative and other leaders of adult groups.* Here would be included such persons as those who constitute the Adult Cabinet [5]; adult church organization officers and leaders; the superintendent of the Adult Department of the Church School; the chairmen and leaders of committees and of special projects, such as parent education; extension work; missionary education, and the like; leaders of music, recreation, dramatics, et cetera.[6]

Most of these persons will come to their tasks without any special preparation beyond that provided by the church itself. They will bring to bear upon them such general abilities as they possess — some of them abilities which are easily transferable to the religious field. A teacher in the public school who knows how to guide a group should find it easy to put that ability to work in the church. The good executive, used to working with people, should easily make a good administrator of some phase of the adult program. Some of the church's richest resources are resident in these people. They will likely fit into the adult work more easily than into children's work or young people's work in so far as their experience is with adults in everyday life.

However much of general background of training and experience they may have, these leaders need special help and training in doing their church job effectively. The content of the pro-

[4] See the discussion on pp. 122–125.

[5] See pp. 132–135.

[6] These leaders should know the Educational Bulletin 402, *Adults in Action*. (See Bibliography, p. 207.)

gram is different, the purpose is specific, the methods are not like those outside the church. Reading, informal and formal leadership education, planning conferences of various kinds, all are essential and indispensable to the program and to their own growth as leaders.

The fact, however, that the range of need in the adult program is so wide, and that every walk of life is filled with people who are actual or potential leaders, makes the problem of leadership in a well-rounded adult program not too difficult. We may call on people for short-time services of various kinds, not expecting the same persons continually to carry the load. This not only makes it easier on the particular leader, but affords variety in leadership, which is a good thing for the groups concerned, and at the same time develops leadership ability and disposition in many more persons. Thus we rapidly build up a faculty of leaders who stand ready to do their part in the total job of the church. As they are used they grow themselves and are helped into areas of Christian experience that they would never otherwise enter. "Many hands make light work," and at the same time make many opportunities for satisfying and significant growth. There are in every church untapped resources of leadership which we need to open up and release.

*d. There are teachers of classes and leaders of discussion and other groups.* These people are directing and guiding the learning process in a peculiar and specific way. They are marshaling the resources of the church in ways which guarantee that learning goes on.[7]

Adults are, to a degree beyond the other age groups, living in situations where they are forced to study and learn new ways of doing if they are to keep their heads above water at all. The stream of experience is for the adult his living textbook. Because they have all had experiences and are always in the process of hav-

[7] All teachers should be familiar with the methods guide *Group Work with Adults Through the Church,* Educational Bulletin 403. (See Bibliography, p. 203.)

ing more, because they have all, to some extent at least, reflected upon the meaning of these experiences, adults may learn from one another. The very fact, for example, that a man and a woman marry, establish a home, have children, and are as good parents as they know how to be, makes them, to the extent of these experiences, potential contributors to others who face similar situations. This means that leading a group of parents, let us say, does not necessarily require an expert in Parent Education, provided that leader knows how to draw out the experiences of those who have had them and make them available to all the members of the group who will together examine and evaluate and profit by that which has relevance for them.

Because of the wide variety of adult interests and needs, we are enabled to select group leaders from a wide range. Then, because of the nature of adults and adult experiences, we may use in particular situations many who would feel their unfitness to be *teachers* in the ordinary sense of the word. We may use them at the point where they have something to share. This fact should not, however, blind us to the need of making available the wisdom and experience of specialists, who may be brought in to deal with particular phases of adult life and adult problems. Such persons may be used as resource people, if not as teachers or leaders.

Just how does this work out in practice? A group of men were without a teacher in their Sunday Church School class. They heard of one of the newer "Learning for Life" study texts, *How to Meet and Master Adversities*.[8] Two copies of the book were purchased and cut up, each chapter being bound separately. Then these separate chapters were parceled out among the members of the class, one for one Sunday, another for another, and so on. Each man took his assignment to lead the discussion of his particular chapter. The discussions were alive and vital. The class went on, after the quarter spent in this subject, to another interest course chosen by the vote of the members of the group and led by each man in turn.

[8] By Walter R. Cremeans. The Westminster Press.

While we may not always wish to solve the problem in this way, yet, if we go about it in the right way, the need for leaders of classes may be rather easily met, especially if the classes are operating on the short-term-interest basis, or are following "Learning for Life." [9] Why not build up a staff of leaders, using people at the points of their own interest and where they are proficient? This helps them to do their work with assurance and keen satisfaction and makes use of latent leadership in the church and community. An attorney may be interested in the application of the principles of Jesus to our modern life. Use him there. A businessman may guide a group on Christian principles in business life, or in a course on stewardship. The pastor might teach, for a short time, the life of Christ or church history. A public school person could well guide in discussing Christian education; a doctor, teach a unit on community issues. These teachers would not work year in and year out. They would stay with a group for six weeks or a quarter or such time as is necessary to complete a particular unit of work. Such a leadership plan opens the way for a fine project in interchurch co-operation, through some "exchange professors." This is done more easily at the adult level than elsewhere.

The adult department of the church deserves a large faculty. Enlist the whole community in fitting into the teaching needs of the various churches. This will provide a larger number of qualified teachers than are available under any other plan.

In the adult program another aspect of the situation is important. We do well sometimes to get varying points of view on crucial subjects. It is conceivable that, for adults, persons might be brought in to present and lead in the discussion of points of view actually at variance with those of the group. Such an arrangement might be open to criticism for lower ages, but not for adults. In the very clash of opinion and the thinking and discussion arising therefrom learning will take place, especially if there is a wise discus-

[9] See the outline of this plan on pp. 83–86. Note its advantages as far as leadership is concerned, especially on p. 86.

sion leader to guide the group in thinking through the issue presented by the specialist or resource person. Of course, in such situations as these, it would be well to have resource persons on different sides of the question who are really experts in their fields. Then all aspects of the problem may be critically examined.

Adult classes should be able to controvert the charge that is made at times that they are places for merely confirming prejudices. It is assumed that adults are able to judge and discriminate and to separate the wheat from the chaff, that they can think and are therefore capable of scrutinizing conflicting points of view with the purpose of discovering the best course of action in view of all the facts. Far too often grownups do tend to ride on their prejudices and in their desire for security fail to take into consideration all points of view and all aspects of truth. Growth sometimes demands that complacency be disturbed and that people be shaken out of their prejudgments, not simply for the purpose of unsettling them, but in order that larger growth may take place and that thinking and judging may be induced.

One further leadership possibility should be mentioned. It relates to the broadening out of the scope of the program for adults to afford them a rich background of religious experience.

Let us illustrate: A recent letter from an earnest Christian woman pointed out the fact that great poetry is a rich source of religious teaching and faith. Why not utilize the values of various related fields? This would open up new vistas of rare value to adults. Many a college or high school teacher of English would be happy to be invited to lead a group of willing adults for a short time in a special study of Browning or Lowell or Tennyson, with a view to discovering the religious and Christian message of these great poets; or here is a science teacher who would actually jump at the chance of offering a course on the relation of science and religion.

The Apostle Paul remarked, "All things are yours."[10] That applies to the adult program and to its leadership as well as elsewhere.

*e. There are the "rank and file" of the adult church constitu-*

[10] I Cor. 3:21.

*ency*. Whether they recognize it or not, all adults occupy a unique place in life just because they are grown up. They are the channels, the mediators, through whom the heritage of both the past and the present is communicated to others, especially to the young and immature. This fact has meaning for us as we confront this problem of leadership. If every adult is a point of radiating influence, why not relate this fact to our leadership needs?

The task of adult education is so comprehensive, so varied, and frequently so informal that much of the process of growth may go along under leaders who are scarcely conscious of being teachers at all, and sometimes not even recognized as such by others. Yet these persons are, in one way and another, influencing and even directing the learning process and so aiding in the achievement of the purposes of the church, or in some cases hindering them. So, we contend, there is a sense in which even the rank and file of the adults in the church are to be considered a part of the "occasion for learning." They exert an influence for good or ill, whether they are "leaders" or not. They dictate the conditions under which the whole learning process goes on, for children, for young people, for adults. They constitute the warp and woof of the life of the church that is constantly impinging upon the lives of all under its influence. They make the current and direct its flow strongly in this way or that. Every adult is, therefore, to the extent of his influence, a part of the formative power of the church at work. It is well for the church to realize this and happy is that church whose adults make the current flow strongly in the right direction.

### 5. The Leader's Function.

We now come to the place where we are to sum up the functions of the good leader of adults. In doing so we cannot do better than turn to a passage of great significance in one of the books of Dr. W. C. Bower, who suggests that the teacher or other leader will perform a fourfold function [11]:

[11] W. C. Bower, *Character Through Creative Experience,* especially pp. 184, 185.

*a.* He will be an *inspirer* of his learners. The good leader will guide his learners into fields where they will have opportunity for growth and will seek in every way to stimulate them to respond to the stimuli about them. Growth will always be in proportion to the degree of wholehearted response. Therefore, the leader will try to challenge and awaken the latent capacities and abilities. He will try to lead those associated with him to discover for themselves, to yield themselves with joy and abandon to creative achievement. While every person must do his own growing, the leader may become the means of promoting that growth, he may be the occasion for it, as he inspires his learners to enter expectantly into those processes and experiences which insure it.

*b.* He will *help the group to organize its learning enterprise* in the most fruitful way. A real leader will be at least one step ahead of his group in the undertaking which is under way. He may not be a *past master,* but he must be enough of a master to show his followers how to gain greater mastery than they have yet achieved.

This is one very important function of a leader in any field or in any phase of the church's educational program.

Regina Westcott Wieman makes a suggestion which is in point here when she proposes that the church may lay hold on successful married couples who are attractive in personality and lead them to share the findings of their own experience in building Christian homes with young people and with young married couples.[12] Some churches have had real success in doing this sort of thing, helping those who have had the experience to share that experience with those who are facing similar situations. Because of inexperience, without help these young couples might lose themselves in unfamiliar territory and in a new and strange undertaking. With this help from those who have gained some degree of understanding and mastery, they will be saved much fruitless and aimless wandering in which time and effort would be wasted. Under the guidance of those who have " been over the road " the enterprise

[12] See *The Modern Family and the Church,* p. 173.

will be so organized, so set up, that it will be most fruitful and most productive of growth.

*c.* He will *assist the group in co-ordinating its purposes and its resources.* Resident in the learning group are many interests, capacities, qualities, and degrees of ability and possibility. All these are contributions which may be made to the common undertaking. Each person's talents must be brought out for the common good. All these resources must be blended into fruitful and purposeful effort, and in such a way that the whole group will be furthered by the contribution of each one. In all this the leader becomes a co-ordinator, using personal initiative and capacity and talent and uniting all these resources into a forward-going, unified, and effective group effort.

In discussing objectives in an earlier chapter, it was pointed out that the most fruitful learning situation was one where the purpose of the leader and that of the learner united in a common enterprise and effort. The degree to which this is done depends largely upon the skill and ability of the leader, who thus becomes the key to the learning process.

*d.* The leader will be a *resource person* for the group. Let us refer to the homemaker's illustration just used above. Not only will these leaders organize the learning enterprise under way, but they will make available to the group, at those points where it is needed and where it is appropriate, such knowledge and experience as they have had. The leader will out of his own experience supplement the knowledge and experience of the members of the learning group, sharing with them that they may act on larger bases of certain fact. Thus the whole process will be greatly enriched and will go forward at points where the whole procedure might otherwise be " stalled " for lack of expert knowledge.

If the leader, in his own person, cannot supply such a resource, he may be able to bring in persons who can supplement him in this regard and thus the group will not lose, but gain. He also will be able and alert to use such resources of knowledge as may lie in the various members of the group itself.

To summarize: The leader is an inspirer, a helper in organization and co-ordination of purposes and plans and procedures, a resource of knowledge and insight and experience. In all these things the true teacher or leader is one who stimulates others to think and to do: that is his principal job. He will ever be alert to act in such a way as to develop the initiative of the members of his group, for the creative teacher knows that the degree of learning is always dependent, not upon the activity of the leader, but upon that of the learner, the student. He will, therefore, ever seek to be a *guide,* who throws responsibility upon his learners as completely as is justified by their maturity, their capacity, and their experience.

"In mountain-climbing a guide is one who directs others to see all the glories of the landscape. If he goes ahead it is not to beat the rest of the party to the top but to point them to the safe and sure way to reach the top. In the learning process, the creative leader does for his group only what they cannot do for themselves. He studies each individual until he knows what is best for that one. If the student is rambling or straying away from the path of learning, the guide sets him right. If he needs a lift over a hard place, he is there to help. In the end all in the the group have arrived somewhere and the leader is with them." [13]

That end, and that goal, from the standpoint of the church and of Christian religious education, is a growing, developing Christian person, who functions effectively and helpfully in the home, the church, and the community, and is one whose interest and sympathy and service reach out to include the whole world of human relationships, in which he seeks to contribute to the progressive realization of the Kingdom of God. The goal of Christian education is a functioning Christian person. The Christian teacher of adults enters, with the greatest Teacher who ever lived, into the most inspiring adventure, that of molding personality, of helping men and women into an ever-increasing participation in the life

[13] E. F. Zeigler, *Toward Understanding Adults,* p. 132. Used by permission of The Westminster Press.

of God. His aim is not to teach that a subject called "religion" exists and should be studied, but is rather to supply the conditions which are conducive to the largest and richest growth and development of Christian experience and Christlike living.

"The religious education of the adult in our generation seeks to unlock adult potentialities, to enlarge adult capacities, to provoke slumbering energies into militant service for righteousness and godliness. This cannot run counter to the work of the Divine in human life; neither is it a substitute for the unfolding purposes of God throughout the ages. It is not the might and power of man displacing the Spirit of God. Rather, it is God's fellow laborers seeking to make 'the kingdom of the world . . . the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ.'" [14]

### 6. A Word About the Leader's Method.

This is not the place for a discussion of general method or of special methods for adult work. For an adequate presentation of these matters, see the book by Dr. Earl F. Zeigler entitled *The Way of Adult Education,* where both materials and methods are dealt with in detail. See also the manual on method, entitled *Group Work with Adults Through the Church,* one of the basic documents prepared in connection with the United Christian Adult Movement.

In concluding our consideration of leadership in the adult program, we should like to suggest the basic consideration to be kept in mind by leaders as well as by followers.

Richard C. Cabot, M. D., has written a helpful book on *Christianity and Sex.* While not planned as a treatise on educational method, the book has in it such a sound philosophy of education and such a provocative presentation of method that we are calling attention to what Dr. Cabot says. Many of the ideas expressed are those of Dr. Cabot, although the form of expression is not his.

Education is the "imparting of life by greater life." The essential means by which we learn ourselves or help others to learn

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 149. Used by permission of The Westminster Press.

is, not talk, but practice and the contagion of personality. Dr. Cabot points out that there is a vast difference between teaching facts and the communication of spiritual apprehension. We do not *tell* a person truthfulness, for instance. Nobody ever *told* a virtue or *was told* a virtue. Virtues are not acquired in so easy a way as that. A virtue is acquired by the same method by which Christianity is acquired — long practice and the contagion of great personalities. We never grow by anything so easy as *being told*. We do not, for instance, teach the sacredness of certain things by telling people that they are sacred, but by building up an attitude by long practice and, most of all, by the contagion of personalities who regard these things as sacred.

How shall we teach the sacredness of the human body? To be successful means to help some person, by the contagion of our own example, to such an attitude and practice as enables him to forget the body altogether, or to master it, or to sacrifice it.

The best way of teaching is through a shared enthusiasm. This means directing the attention of others to something you care for deeply. We teach ourselves and we teach others the best that we know by sharing our enthusiasms.

A national leader in Children's Work told of her professor who loved books. He would take a book in his hands and talk of it and open it so reverently that he actually " made you want to read that book." This is teaching by shared enthusiasm.

We are what we are today because of the enthusiasms we have shared. People are truthful, not because truthfulness is a desirable virtue, but because they have come, to some degree at least, to share an enthusiasm for truth. All of us have enthusiasms that are worthy. The best thing to do with an enthusiasm is to share it. When we do we are trying to help someone else to love something that we love.

This weary, wistful, sin-sick world looks at a Christian leader and asks, " Where may the key to our perplexing and complicated life be found? " It is his privilege, and duty to answer: " Here it is; we have found it. Christ holds the key. It may be used in the

practice of the Christian faith and life as we follow him." Then it is the unspeakable joy of that leader to stimulate and guide others into the vital experience of that faith and that life which are mediated through vital contact with Jesus Christ, whose word to us today is the word spoken to his earlier followers, "I will make you to become."

# APPENDIX I

## THE OBJECTIVE ON CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE AND PARENTHOOD [1]

Christian education seeks to develop in each member of the family the ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the life of this primary social group.

1. Christian education seeks to lead each member of the family to participate willingly and helpfully in the responsibilities and work of the home.

Helping to plan the family budget; a sense of responsibility in avoiding waste and extravagance, in sharing in the housework, in caring for younger children or those who are ill, in avoiding activities which make needless extra work or worry for others, and in carrying a just share of the economic load of the home.

2. Christian education seeks to lead each member of the family to accept his or her share of responsibility for maintaining the happy and harmonious fellowship of the home, to participate cheerfully in the necessary give-and-take of intimate home relationships, and to respect the experience and judgments of other members of the family.

Making allowances for fatigues, anxiety, and nervous tension on the part of others; being able to differ in opinions with respect and appreciation; enjoying and appreciating the abilities, the qualities, and the contributions to the common life, of other members of the family group.

3. Christian education seeks to enable children and young people to accept, appreciate, and respond to those expressions of

[1] The International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, *Christian Education of Adults,* Part II, pp. 56, 57. Used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

parental authority and guidance which parental responsibility makes necessary and parental wisdom makes desirable.

While thoroughly committed to a democratic pattern of family life based upon mutual respect for the personalities of others, even though these personalities be young and immature, the Christian interpretation of family relationships recognizes the legitimacy and necessity of parental authority. Such exertion of authority should give way, however, as rapidly as growing self-reliance and self-control on the part of children make it possible, to a relationship of counsel and merely suggestive guidance.

4. Christian education seeks to develop in those who are contemplating marriage a wholesome Christian interpretation of the marriage relationship; Christian motives for undertaking this relationship, including the responsibilities of parenthood, and an intelligent and informed physical, social, and spiritual preparation therefor.

Wholesome attitudes toward the opposite sex and social relationships with the opposite sex during childhood and particularly during adolescence determine to a large extent the ideals and motives which will prevail in courtship and marriage. Therefore, the preparation for marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood should begin early and form an integral part of the curriculum.

5. Christian education seeks to enable the parents of young children to appreciate their grave responsibility for the early religious and moral training of their children, and to provide these parents with guidance, with inspiration, and with concrete facilities for discharging that responsibility.

Increasing recognition of the determining influence of the experience of the earliest years of life upon personality and moral and religious character emphasizes the primary educational responsibility of the home, which so largely provides and conditions that early experience. Parents ordinarily cannot avoid

being the child's first teachers of religion or of irreligion, as the case may be. The church cannot take over parental responsibility for this earliest period of the child's Christian education. It can, however, prepare parents to discharge their inevitable responsibility effectively.

6. Christian education seeks to enable parents to understand and act in accordance with the laws of growing life in their parental responsibilities.

It is as important for parents as for teachers to understand and use sound educational principles in all their dealings with their children. The allocation to the school and the church of important phases of the educational enterprise does not relieve the home of responsibility for using sound educational practice in conditioning those formative experiences and providing those determinative influences for which the home is still inevitably responsible.

7. Christian education seeks to lead parents in their own continuous religious and intellectual growth, both for their own sakes as growing persons, and also to keep them in sympathetic contact with the process of growth which their children are undergoing.

## APPENDIX II

### THE STATEMENT OF AN OBJECTIVE DEALING WITH SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND GROUP LIFE [1]

Christian education seeks to develop forms, ideals, and practices in the essential structures of group life which increasingly embody the ideals of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as taught and exemplified by Jesus.

[1] The International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, *Christian Education of Adults,* Part I, pp. 52–54. Used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

1. Christian education seeks to exalt and promote a Christian ideal of home and family life based upon Jesus' evaluation of persons as children of God regardless of sex, age, or economic status.

A Christian interpretation of the marriage relationships, of parenthood, and of mutual consideration, the strong bearing the burdens of the weak.

2. Christian education seeks to exalt and promote the ideal of the church as a household of God and to bring about a continuous rejuvenation and reconstruction of the church for its task in an ever-changing world.

Recognizing the many different ideals and patterns of the church which have prevailed in different historical periods, acknowledging the weaknesses and un-Christlike deeds which have sometimes characterized the church; in full penitence for the present divided state of the church and its consequent impotence with reference to many un-Christlike characteristics of our social order; yet recognizing the guiding hand of divine purpose and longing in the continuous history of the church, Christian education seeks for a chastened, united, and victorious church which will be able effectively to cope with those great forces in our modern world that deny spiritual values and resist the advance of the Kingdom of God.

3. Christian education seeks to develop a missionary-minded church, conscious of the world significance of the message and program of Christianity, and devoting itself to the extension of the Kingdom through all geographical areas and all areas of life.

Not only must individual Christians participate in the missionary enterprise through providing funds, giving service, and prayer, but the church as such must recognize the world-wide range of its parish. " To any man or church, possessed of religious certainty, the mission in some form is a matter not of choice but of obligation. If there is any truth or value in religion at all, it is for all men. To ask whether missions in essence should

any longer go on is like asking whether good will should continue to express itself."

4. Christian education seeks such provision for education as shall enable the church to make its full contribution to the abundant living of growing persons through the religious view of life and carry its own share of responsibility efficiently, and in which all education shall be consistent with and contributory to the Christian interpretation and way of life.

The separation of administrative responsibility between church and state for religious education and general education cannot be interpreted as justifying a divided or fragmentary or conflicting educational experience on the part of growing persons, nor as implying the elimination of the spiritual element from the education of large numbers of persons.

5. Christian education seeks an economic order in which spiritual values shall prevail over material values, in which persons shall be considered before profits, and in which the material resources of the world shall be exploited in the service and welfare of all rather than of the strong or cunning or unscrupulous.

Growing persons who must live in and from an economic order which is fundamentally unchristian in its basic purposes, assumptions, and patterns, cannot achieve fullness of Christian character. The order itself must be changed to favor rather than penalize the manifestation of essentially Christian practices.

6. Christian education seeks a political order in which public office is universally held as a sacred trust and in which Christian character qualifies rather than hampers one for effective and successful participation in such public service.

While public office is used by many Christian persons as a means of discharging high Christian service, the general character and patterns of much of our political life are a matter of public shame and personal disgrace in the light of Christian ideals. A general

change in the patterns of political life is needed to open the way for growing persons to become increasingly Christian through political activity.

7. Christian education seeks a social order in which each race will be appreciated and respected for its own particular contribution to the enrichment of the life of the whole human family; in which persons will be appreciated and respected on the basis of their human worth without regard to color, race, or traditional prejudices; in which no one shall have either handicap or advantage by reason of race or color.

The practice of interracial good will and appreciation in daily contacts; the elimination of economic, educational, political, religious, and social discrimination against any race as such.

8. Christian education seeks a warless world and a system of international relationships based upon mutual respect and confidence and justice among nations which shall make valid the universal brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.

When our nationalism and internationalism are such that patriotism and loyalty to country necessarily come into conflict with Christian ideals of universal brotherhood, growing persons are denied their full privileges and rights through which the larger loyalty should glorify and enrich the lesser loyalty rather than seem to violate it. The war system and narrow nationalism must give way to a world system based on the essential unity of the whole human family.

## APPENDIX III

### A STATEMENT OF ADULT OBJECTIVES [1]

*Objective I*

Christian education seeks to lead adults into a progressive and continuously developing Christian experience which issues in Christlike character and conduct and in dynamic Christian living. This involves:

1. Faith in a personal God as the supreme reality in human experience and a vital personal relationship to him.
2. A knowledge and appreciation of Jesus Christ which leads to faith in and acceptance of him as Saviour and Lord; which manifests itself in daily life and conduct, and through an increasingly loyal and effective participation in his cause.
3. A growing knowledge, appreciation, and use of the Bible and of the best religious experience of the race as expressed in religious literature and art, and in life itself.
4. The progressive achievement of such a vigorous, mature, and unified religious life as will result in:

   A rich personal Christian faith.

   The development of a Christian interpretation of life and the universe as expressing the divine purpose and plan, and a philosophy of life, based upon this interpretation, which functions in all life's situations.

   Participation with God and with one's fellow men in the varied activities that have to do with advancement of the Kingdom. An increasing purpose and ability, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the exercise of Christian controls in all

[1] These statements are those adopted by the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., in actions on February 27, 1931; February 26, 1932; June 7, 1932. Used by permission.

the situations of daily life which are faced by adults, especially in such areas as the home, the church, and the community; in vocational activities; and in social, political, and industrial relations.

*Objective II*

Christian education seeks to lead adults to contribute constructively to the building of a Christian home and family life in which all the richest values of Christian faith and life are conserved, enhanced, and made increasingly significant for every member of the home and, through the home, for the community, the nation, and the world.

This involves:

1. The recognition of the home as the basic educational institution, a miniature democracy, in which every member has definite rights, privileges, and responsibilities.
2. The increasing disposition and ability on the part of adults to make the whole atmosphere of the home genuinely Christian.
3. A growing respect for and appreciation of the personality of others, and the common sharing as far as possible on the part of each member of the group, and especially the disposition and ability on the part of adults to enter helpfully into the life and experiences of children and young people.
4. The practice of such relationships between members of the home or family group and participation in such activities as will result in a genuine sense of partnership in the development of a Christian home and family life.
5. A recognition of the privilege and responsibility of Christian parenthood and purposeful preparation therefor; a realization that the experience of parenthood itself is an opportunity for Christian growth and development; and the use of every possible means by which this experience may be made more significant and meaningful.
6. Making the home a school in Christian living, in which the religious values of the everyday experiences of life are recog-

nized and used as means to the development of Christian character.

7. The discovery and the use of those special religious activities which will contribute to the development of a Christian home life and of the Christian faith and character of each member of the family.
8. Intelligent, full, and hearty co-operation between the home and the church.
9. Co-operation with and participation in those community programs, organizations, agencies, and activities which may help in developing a more Christian home and community life.

*Objective III*

Christian education seeks to develop in adults the ability and disposition to enter creatively into the life and work of the church as the organized society of Christians and the chief agency through which the cause of Jesus Christ is to be advanced.

This involves:

1. A recognition that the church should be a Christian fellowship in which children, youth, and adults may together develop Christian character through sharing responsibility, each in proportion to his ability, and the acceptance by adults of primary responsibility for planning and achieving such a fellowship in the church.
2. Making the church a place for the practice of the Christian spirit, which becomes a creative power in leading men and women into dynamic Christian living.
3. Participation in constructive Christian service in and through the channels of the church and related agencies.
4. An increasing disposition and ability to carry the load of leadership.
5. An increasing disposition and ability for intelligent, loyal, and helpful followership.
6. Such continuous restudy and re-evaluation of the church in the light of modern knowledge and life as will contribute to the

progressive realization of a church which more and more perfectly expresses the Christian concept of the will and purpose of God for the world.

*Objective IV*

Christian education seeks to lead adults into a growing ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the building of a social order throughout the community, the nation, and the world, which increasingly embodies the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

This involves:

1. An increasing recognition of the fact that in the Christian conception God himself is at the center of all life, involved in and active in every social situation and in every social process, and is affected by the actions of any member of the group as well as by the actions of the group itself.
2. A growing sense of personal responsibility for the actions of the social group of which the individual is a member.
3. A growing reverence and respect for the personality of other human beings.
4. The disposition and ability to see the religious implications inherent in social situations and problems whether economic, industrial, political, or of any other sort.
5. Constructive criticism of one's own personal behavior in all social relations as well as of the present social order, with a view to discovering such solutions of such social situations and problems as will result in the realization of the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.
6. An increasing sense of responsibility for skill in dealing with social situations and problems, not only on the basis of past practices, but rather through the discovery and application of those solutions which will afford the largest opportunity for the development of Christlike character in all concerned.
7. An increasing sense of responsibility for such helpful criticism of and intelligent participation in various political and govern-

mental processes as will advance the Kingdom of God through manifesting the spirit of friendship, brotherhood, and neighborliness between man and man; between social groups, between races and tongues, and between the nations of the world.

## APPENDIX IV

### WHY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES VARY[1]

A classification may be helpful in clarifying the reasons for variety in religious experience. As in all experience, there exist in religious experience what we may call conditioning factors, elements that enter into experience and determine its quality and degree of intensity.

**1. Differences in the Individual.**

It is an established fact in psychology that individuals differ in their emotional, mental, and volitional make-up. Some types of persons more readily than others experience God as an objective reality. Some more readily than others enter into experiences characterized as mystical. The degree or manner of one's response to the religious stimulus may be said, therefore, to be conditioned at least in part by temperament.

**2. Differences in Religious Environment.**

Obviously the religious background in home, church, and community makes a contribution to each individual and conditions to some extent the type of response which he makes to religious stimuli. It is natural that one who comes from an environment characterized by deep religious fervor, freely expressed, should find it

[1] The International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, *Christian Education of Adults*, Part I, pp. 12, 13. Used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

normal to make such expression; while another, with a different religious heritage, might be no less affected — might, indeed, have a greater intensity of feeling — but might find outward expression difficult. One type of response is well illustrated in the revivalism of certain nonliturgical communions, more particularly in pioneer communities. In the worship of the Society of Friends (Quakers) one finds a totally different response, though equally genuine and real to those nurtured in that faith. On the other hand, the one nurtured in the liturgical tradition may respond to religious stimulus in his accepted pattern, but perhaps not at all to the religious stimulus in an unaccustomed setting. The form of the specifically religious activities in which a person engages and, to a large extent, the very pattern of religious experience itself are determined by what he observes and by what is normally expected in the religious group with which he is surrounded or in which he participates.

### 3. Differences in General Cultural Background.

The form and content of religious experience are conditioned by general cultural backgrounds and achievements. Among primitive peoples, superstition, irrational fears, limited understanding of natural laws, and undisciplined or unchecked imagination both limit and determine the general character of religious experience. A scientific culture and habit of thinking, on the other hand, render many experiences characteristic of primitive cultures impossible and open up vast new possibilities of relationship, attitude, understanding, and appreciation. Within the same general social culture, there is a wide variety of specific cultural backgrounds accounting for varieties of religious experience.

### 4. Differences Arising out of Varying Responses in Specific Life Situations.

In a way different from, or perhaps in addition to, the above, individuals vary in their religious response in specific life situations. A person's given response is conditioned by the total range of experiences that have gone into the making of his life. Thus, in life

situations involving bereavement, financial reverses, loss of position, accident, sacrificial acts of service, falling in love, loss of health or loss of one of the senses, the presence of great beauty, filial love, or moments of high decision, no two persons will respond alike. Some respond in a way essentially religious; in others the religious element seems to be absent. Even when the response is distinctly religious the quality and intensity vary with each individual. This variable response is understood when one realizes that one's concept of God, philosophy of life, basic attitude to life, emotional maturity, educational background, intelligence — the fused deposit of all of life's experience — enter into and condition the nature, the quality, and the intensity of one's religious response in a given life situation. This particular response in turn becomes a factor in determining future responses.

This analysis of reasons for varieties of religious experience does not readily suggest types. There is the religious experience known as conversion, but even among conversion experiences there is variety ranging from the sudden cataclysmic type to experiences in which many would recognize no religious element. The conversion experience accompanied by an emotional upheaval of great intensity has validity and should certainly, to some extent, be considered " normal " for the person who has consciously and perversely lived a life of sinfulness or who is oppressed by a sense of inadequacy and unworthiness. The accompaniment of such an experience is rightly expected to be a complete reversal of the mode of living and of the whole attitude toward spiritual values.

## APPENDIX V

## FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND INVESTIGATION

### I. The Church "Discovers" Adult Education

1. What reasons can you give for the lack of relationship on the part of the church to the general adult education movement in America?

Can the church fail to be concerned? Why, or why not? In what ways do you feel that the church should be related? How shall it show its concern?

2. Assign the book *The Church and Adult Education,* by Bernard E. Meland, for reading and report.

Does the class think that the positions taken are sound? If not, why not?

3. How do you account for the close connection between religion and the adult education movement abroad?

In preparation for this assignment read some of the references in the Bibliography dealing with this movement.

4. List the contributions that the church has to make to adult education and arrange your list in order of importance.

5. List and investigate the various adult education enterprises in your community. Find out whether your church may be related to them helpfully. Divide your group for this investigation. Follow through, making a project out of each "tie-up."

### II. The Church's Purpose in Adult Education

1. Out of the experience of the group, select some cases where the leader and the learner, or learners, agreed upon a common purpose and undertook to accomplish it together. Why does this offer the ideal "learning situation"?

By contrast point out some cases where the objective was

clearly in the mind of the leader but not in that of the learner. How did this situation work out?

2. List the various ways it helps to have clear-cut and commonly understood and agreed-upon objectives.

3. After reading over the seven objectives, pp. 38, 39 and Appendixes I, II, III, formulate in the rough as adequate a statement as possible of adult objectives. Try in the statements themselves to embody the suggestions made in the following questions:

a. What results do we wish to see brought about in the lives of men and women by the church?

b. Arrange these in columns, putting together in the same column objectives which are stated in the same terms. (For instance, some statements may describe qualities of personality; some may be in terms of changes to be produced; some in terms of actions desired, et cetera.)

c. After making sure that all these are general or comprehensive objectives, break them down into specific objectives, which indicate some of the steps to be taken in the realization of the general objectives. Illustration: Suppose that your general objective was good churchmanship. One specific objective would be participation in the church service; another, a study unit on *Your Church and Its Program.*[1]

### III. How Does Religious Growth Take Place?

1. Assign papers on "Three Cases I Have Known Where Personality Has Been Radically Changed Through Some Outstanding Experience or Set of Experiences." Discuss these reports in the class group with a view to discovering what really happened.

2. Draw from the group illustrations of cases where different persons reacted differently when facing identical or seemingly identical situations. What things made the difference?

[1] A "Learning for Life" text by Harry C. Munro. See Bibliography, p. 198.

3. Have a member of the group report on Bower, *The Curriculum of Religious Education,* Chapter VII, bringing out the relationship of knowledge to experience.

4. In discussion list on the board cases where Jesus used situations and guided his learners in them.

5. Draw from the group, by written assignment or in discussion, cases which illustrate each of the laws of learning.

List and describe cases where the church in its program has violated these laws.

6. Make a list of cases, and describe each, where the church has done an effective job in helping persons to learn how to live the Christian life. What was done? How did the church go about this?

### IV. The Need for and Nature of Adult Education

1. What are the pros and cons of the statement, "Adults are the hope of the future"?

2. Investigate the research data presented in this chapter on the educability of adults; if time permits, make a few practical tests on yourself or some other adult to see whether the results you obtain are in approximate harmony with the data presented.

3. What do population trends show about the place of adults in the future? In what ways does this concern the church program of religious education?

4. Have a committee of four students prepare and present to the class for discussion as comprehensive a list as possible of the typical adult experiences that are hostile to Christian living and "pull in the opposite direction." How can the church overcome these obstacles?

5. Differentiate between the following:

   a. The learner's "total curriculum."

   b. The learner's "planned curriculum."

   c. The "church's curriculum."

6. Assign for study and report Chapters XI and XII of *The Curriculum of Religious Education,* by W. C. Bower. Call for

this report in connection with the class discussion of sections 4, 5, and 6.

7. Have members of the class discover through interviews with church members the actual amount of time adults are yielding to the guidance of the church. Divide the church members so that as many as possible are interviewed and no one canvassed more than once.

Use the results of the survey as the basis of a frank discussion of the problem your particular church faces in trying to help adults to grow spiritually.

8. Why do you believe that the resources for adult Christian education are sufficient to meet the problems that must be faced?

### V. Some Essential Elements in a Balanced Program for Adults

1. Assign to different members of the group the manuals of the United Christian Adult Movement (see Bibliography) with a view to their becoming acquainted with the resources of each.

Call for reports that bear upon the problems or interests of the members of the group as they think of adult work in their local churches.

2. Form committees composed of persons who come from the same church to report on the adult worship services as now conducted in their particular church. The report should make some appraisal of these worship services and offer suggestions for their improvement.

3. A committee may be chosen to report on the book *Thirteen Party Plans for Adults,* with a view to opening up the resources that are available for adult social and recreational life.

4. A member or a committee from the group should be asked to investigate the "Learning for Life" study program for adults to determine the possibilities of its wider use in local churches.

5. Different members of the group may be assigned the task of discovering how their denominations promote social education and action among their members.

6. Assign to each class member the task of preparing a list of adult church experiences observed in which deeper and richer Christian fellowship is engendered and also a list of observed experiences which vitiate Christian fellowship.

## VI; VII. Principles for Planning the Adult Program of the Church; Present Opportunities in the Church for Adult Christian Education

1. Assign responsibility for finding in Matthew's Gospel the instances where Jesus taught adults as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| synagogue groups (4) | once each: |
| the disciples (2) | high priests |
| Pharisees (10) | elders |
| scribes (7) | Herodians |
| multitudes (4) | a lawyer |
| chief priests (3) | disciples of Jewish leaders |
| | Sadducees |

Have those assigned report in each case on: Jesus' purpose; the adults' attitude; Jesus' approach; his method; the result in their lives.

2. Make a survey of the adult population of your community, and of the number of adults actually now enlisted in the adult activities of all the churches. When you have the facts, present them in a document or on the blackboard. Discuss the reasons for the situation you have found and try to discover the best way out.

3. Secure and try out in your class a good interest finder, thus familiarizing the group with its possibilities and values. [2]

4. Assign to several individuals the task of finding three cases each where an unfelt or unsensed need was awakened by starting with a felt need.

5. List on the blackboard cases in which the church is actually

[2] Possibly use the one printed in *Learning for Life*, Educational Bulletin 410.

basing its program on conscious interests and needs of adults. Also make a list of some unmet needs.

6. What are some of the difficulties in using chronological age as the basis of grading adults?

Assign a report on the discussion of grading in The International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, *Christian Education of Adults,* Part I, pp. 125–130. Discuss the positions taken in the group, illustrating various possible bases of grading or grouping. What effect would functional grouping have upon your church?

7. List all the adult activities in your church according to the outline of this chapter and arrange them in order of their contribution to adult spiritual growth. Be prepared to state the reasons for your order of listing.

### VIII. How Shall We Organize Adults?

1. Test any organized church group of which you are a member by the six principles of organization listed in section 2.

2. Reproduce copies of the survey chart contained in this chapter, and use it as a basis for surveying the adult work situation in the local churches represented by the members of the group. The surveys can then become the basis for group discussion and action.

3. Investigate the possibilities of setting up local church organizations for adult work along the lines discussed in this chapter, especially section 6.

### IX. Some Forward Steps in the Right Direction

1. Secure manuals of the United Christian Adult Movement which apply in the field of Christian family life; report what contribution these manuals or bulletins make toward more effective promotion of Christian family life.

2. Secure from denominational headquarters or from the International Council of Religious Education full information on the

United Christian Adult Movement and present it as a report for discussion by the group.

3. If the class is interdenominational in personnel, divide the members into denominational groups and have each group secure from denominational headquarters materials to be formulated into reports on:

a. Plans for unifying the women's work of the local church.
b. Plans for organizing the men for effective church work.
c. Plans for the organization of the adult program and the adult department of the church.
d. Special plans for young adults.

(If the class is a denominational group only, the same project can be carried out for the one denomination represented.)

4. Have a report on Dr. Gleason's study (see Bibliography). When assigning Gleason's book to one member of the class, ask the others to read *Young Adults in the Church* as a basis for discussion of the promotion of young adult work.

### X. Leadership in the Church's Adult Program

1. Assign a report from every member of the class on:
   a. One case where a good leader using inadequate facilities did a successful job.
   b. One case where leaders starting with inadequate equipment so handled the situation as to secure more adequate equipment and developed an effective program.

   In both cases be specific and go into detail.

2. After listing on the board all the qualifications of a good leader that the group can suggest, arrange them in order of importance, giving grounds for your arrangement.

3. Have each class member report on one case of a leader who was no past master himself but was able to help the members of his group to learn from each other.

4. Make a complete list of all the types of leaders needed in a church to carry on an adequate and successful adult program.

After making your list check it against that beginning on page 135 of The International Curriculum Guide, Book Four, *Christian Education of Adults,* Part I. In each case indicate where the particular leader is to be trained for his particular leadership job.

5. Have one member of the group study and report upon the Standard Curriculum of Leadership Education, both First and Second Series Courses. Use Bulletins 501 and 502 as the basis of the report.

6. Assign a report on opportunities and plans by which a church may develop more efficient leaders through "informal" leadership education.

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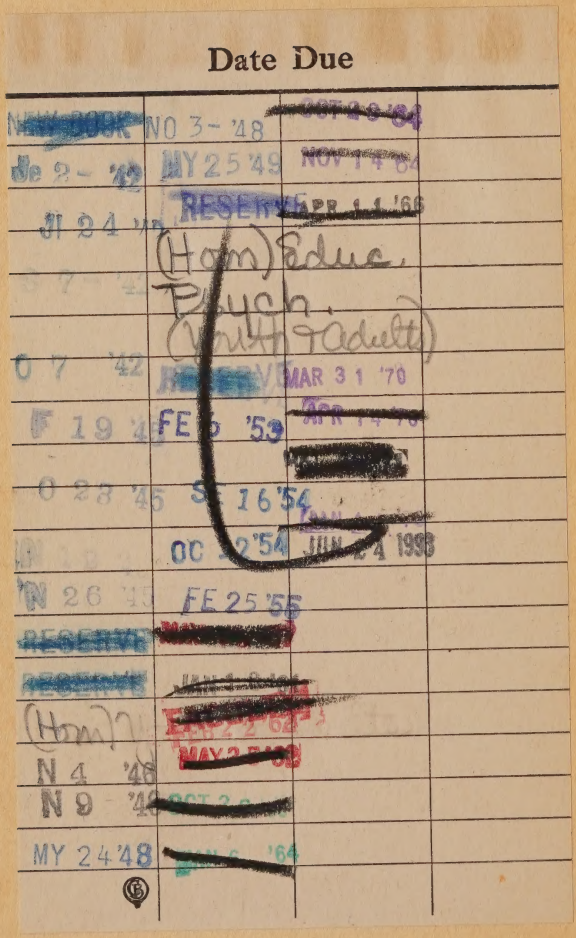
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